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EUROPEAN JOAD TOUR REPORTS

# Backstreets

#56 SUMMER/FALL 1997

THE BOSS MAGAZINE

## One Step Up

Two CDs Back:  
A Tribute to the Boss

*Once Upon a Time in Italy*

Springsteen serenades his original hometown

*The American Imagination*

A talk with *Born in the USA* author Jim Cullen



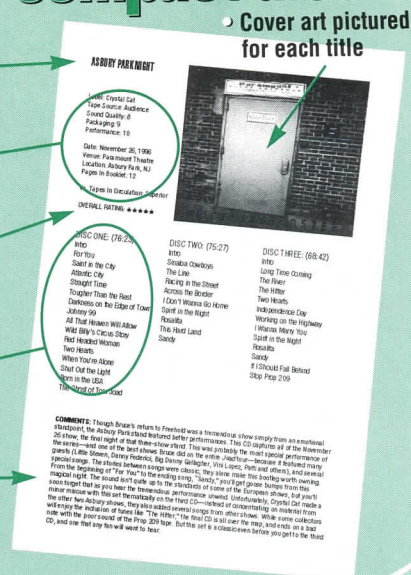


# YOU BETTER NOT TOUCH 3

## The NEW guide to Boss bootlegs on compact disc

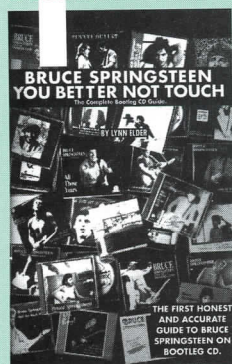


- Nearly 200 new Springsteen titles released between August 1994 and June 1997.
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- Extensive, honest comments to help you find the best boots available and avoid the titles that don't deliver.

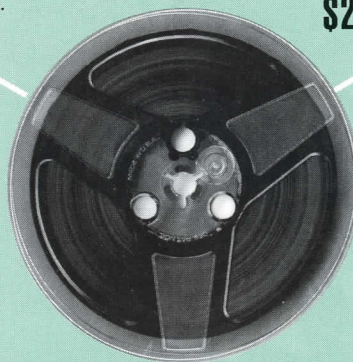


It's finally here! Hot off the presses is *You Better Not Touch Volume Three*, the third book in Backstreets reviewer Lynn Elder's series of guides to the bootleg CDs of Bruce Springsteen. Since the publication of *Volume Two* in the fall of 1994, some two hundred new titles have been released and reviewed here. As usual, the new volume is thorough, honest, and well-illustrated, in the same format as the first two volumes—a sample page is shown above. YBNT3 also includes three appendices, and at a massive 232 pages, it's the biggest one yet by far—coupled with Volumes 1 and 2, you'll have exhaustive advice on virtually every Boss bootleg to date and a resource no collector should be without.

### Volume 1



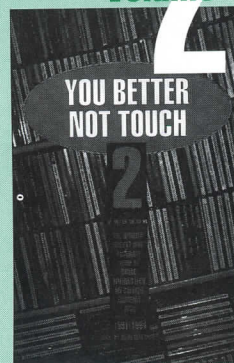
YBNT1 compiles reviews and ratings for the first 80+ Bruce boot CDs, including quite a few classics, released through 1991. By Lynn Elder. **\$10**



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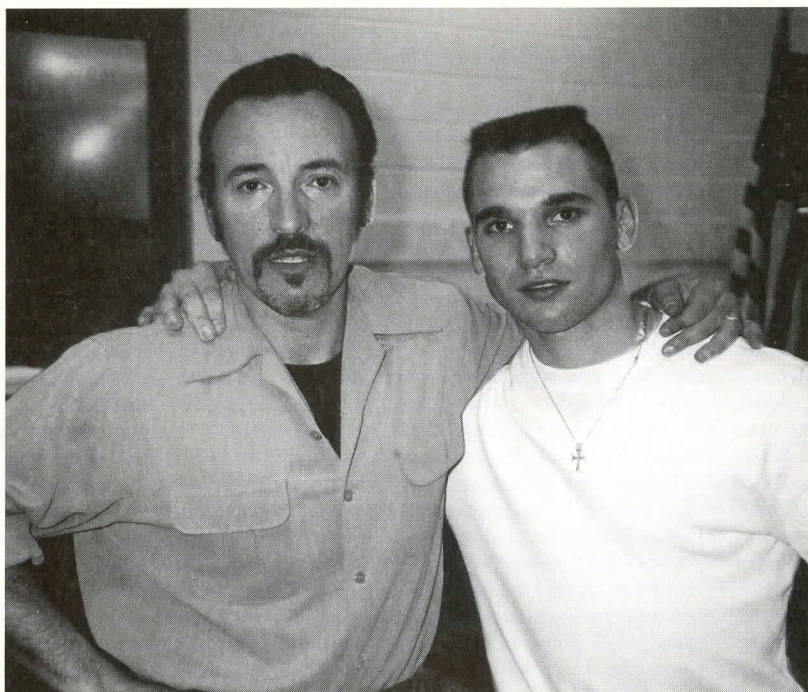
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*Backstreets* subscriber Dan George meets the man in Freehold, NJ, 11/8/96.

# Backstreets

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**Publisher**  
Charles R. Cross

**Editor**  
Christopher Phillips

**Associate Editors**  
Erik Flannigan, Jonathan B. Pont, Robert Santelli

**Contributors**  
Rich Breton, David DuBois, Lynn Elder, Jared Houser,  
Josh Jacobson, Dan Johnson, Phil and Steve Jump, Bob Makin,  
Jeff McDermott, Jon Phillips, Lisa Pritchard, Jim Ragsdale,  
Bernie Ranellone, Debra L. Rothenberg, Arlen Schumer,  
Mary Schuh, James Shive, Billy Smith, Mark Stricherz,  
Marty Venturo, Bob Zimmerman, and many others  
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# CON TENTS

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#56 Vol. 14, No. 4  
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## FEATURES

### ONE STEP UP

Fellow artists pay tribute to Springsteen.  
By Robert Makin ..... 10

### ONCE UPON A TIME IN ITALY

When the Tom Joad tour gets to "The Boot," it's time for Morricone, "O Sole Mio," and midnight serenades. By Ermanno Labianca. .... 14

### SAINT IN THE CITY

The "never-ending tour" feels some reverberations from Asbury Park as Springsteen takes another swing through Europe. .... 18

### BETTER ANGELS

The *Backstreets* interview with *Born in the USA* author Jim Cullen. By Jonathan B. Pont. . . 26

## DEPARTMENTS

### LETTERS

To the editors of *Backstreets*. .... 4

### ON THE BACKSTREETS

Feeling Jackson Cage. By John Wesley Harding. . . 6

### ON LIPS

Springsteen and the silver screen. .... 7

### GREETINGS FROM ASBURY PARK

Notes from the Shore. By Robert Makin. .... 8

### ON COLLECTING

*Asbury Park Night*; updated '78 releases. .... 30

### ON DISC

Live reissues and covers galore. .... 32

### CLASSIFIEDS

Pen pals, messages, and tapes. .... 33

## COVER

### BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

5/18/97 Nice, France  
Roberto Ghiglione Photo



# LETTERS

## REAL MAN

Dear Editor:

I've been a Bruce Springsteen fan since 1973. I championed him when he was an unknown, revelled in the glory years from '75-'84, defended him when he released *Nebraska*, defended him again when people called him a sellout with *BUSA*, etc.

I've just come home from seeing John Fogerty at the Tower Theatre in Philadelphia. Springsteen should be made a roadie for this tour just so he can watch a man growing old gracefully and rocking the shit out of an audience. Maybe night-after-night exposure to the Fogerty tour would kick Springsteen in the ass long enough to realize that he used to be pretty damn good at this rock 'n' roll stuff himself.

As I said, I've stuck with the guy forever, but it's pretty difficult to defend a millionaire rock star sitting in a mansion reading about the plight of the disenfranchised, taking it upon himself to become their spokesman and writing an all-but-unlistenable album about it. There was only one Woody Guthrie, and Springsteen ain't him.

I've talked with other fans and apparently I'm not the only one getting fed up with Springsteen's

"new direction." I'm not one of those people pining away for the return of the E Street Band either. Their performance at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame concert pretty much proved they're not going to be his saving grace.

There are several things he could do to recapture some credibility. He could record and release the dozen new songs that he debuted on his recent tour. He could also finally put out a "bootleg series" a la Dylan with all the songs his loyal fans have been requesting forever. What true fan wouldn't kill to see Bruce on tour playing songs like "Frankie" and "Loose Ends"?

I guess after seeing John Fogerty put on a truly classic show in every sense of the word, I was reminded that I used to be able to consistently count on Springsteen for that kind of experience. And sadly, that time has passed.

Rich Pirone  
rodjpirone@enter.net

## BETTER DAYS

Dear Editor:

I read an article the other day about how the public responded when Bob Dylan picked up an electric guitar for the first time—the outrage and the feeling of betrayal. I thought, how silly for an audience to do that to their artist. Then I realized that is

exactly what old Springsteen "fans" do.

You know, change is not such a bad thing. In some fans' bitching since 1988 they missed a stunning, emotional appearance on *Saturday Night Live*, a really funny "57 Channels" video; the awesome statement of "Streets of Philadelphia"; true, incisive political commentary based on experience and not on movies; and three of the best love songs Springsteen has ever written—"Secret Garden," "Dry Lightning," and "Across the Border."

I'll take the bridge to "Secret Garden" over three-fourths of the *Born to Run* album—which to me sounds like someone trying way too hard. And I'll take a show with the man whose art I admire via acoustic guitar in a small hall over the rinky-dink organ of "Glory Days" with 20,000 other people, the majority of whom in my experience have been drunk and/or completely out of touch with any of Springsteen's music except for the melody or Max's drum beat.

Frankly, I'm sick of it. Springsteen has grown so much since 1973 and I think his output now is far better in terms of artistic quality than what he was putting out in '78. I'm sure you all had a really nice time driving around in your first car with your first lover listening to *Born to Run* for the first time. You know what? I don't give a shit. And I'll make a bet that Bruce doesn't either. Good for him.

David Billotti  
Los Angeles, CA

## SOULS OF THE DEPARTED

Dear Editor:

I just received and read issue #55, and as usual, it is excellent. As someone who hasn't had an opportunity to see any of the *Tom Joad* shows, I greatly appreciate the tour coverage.

I also enjoyed the interviews with Southside and Danny, and found Fred Goodman's interview very interesting—you deserve credit for doing the interview, as I know some people cannot endure anything written about Bruce that might not be completely complementary. I think the issues Mr. Goodman raises are very valid ones, and I agree they deserve to be explored. However, I think he falls short

by not having interviewed the interested parties and by relying strictly on older interviews and the observations of others. Why didn't he ask Bruce what his feelings are about the intersection of art and commerce? Bob Costas did just that in his Columbia Radio Hour interview, and received some interesting and enlightening answers.

What I found most objectionable is Goodman's statement about Bruce and Woody Guthrie. To say that Bruce has copped Woody's style for profit is ludicrous. Woody Guthrie was a great troubadour, but he was following in a long tradition of troubadours—a blind Greek poet from a few thousand-odd years ago named Homer comes to mind. Guthrie wasn't the first and he won't be the last, and to say that no one else has the right to write and sing in his style is very unfair. Woody has been dead a long time and was unable to make music for the last 15-20 years of his life; people like Bruce and Pete Seeger (and his son Arlo), by continuing in the folk vein and singing his songs and writing new songs, keep his music and spirit alive for the coming generations.

Lynn Burgess  
Chicago, IL

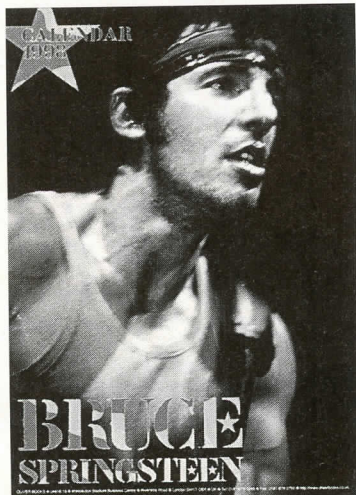
## WITH EVERY WISH

Dear Editor:

Although I was heartened to see an interview with Fred Goodman in issue #55, the content of that interview fell short of the challenges laid down in Mr. Goodman's *Mansion on the Hill*. This book is a fantastic look at the business of the entertainment industry, and contrary to the impression that the *Backstreets* interview may have created, a glaring indictment of Jon Landau as a person and an influence on the career of Bruce Springsteen.

While Mr. Goodman's *Backstreets* interview doesn't entirely back off of the clear picture he paints in *Mansion on the Hill*, he still does not level the accusations in the same unflinching manner. Through use of such ambiguous adjectives as "interesting," "fascinating" and "complex," a casual reader might come away thinking that this book is a paean to Jon Landau. It is not. He is portrayed as having a Svengali-

# 1998 SPRINGSTEEN CALENDAR



The official Bruce Springsteen calendar for next year is out now from the UK! This one is from the same company we've been carrying for years, with a huge shot of the Boss for every month of the year. The Euro calendar that was also offered in '96 and '97 won't be returning this year, so this is the only Bruce calendar planned for 1998

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type hold on Bruce, which in turn prompted Springsteen to act in less than admirable ways.

One story, though seemingly mundane, has Bruce behaving in a very un-Boss-like way. After seeing Bruce backstage at the Boston Music Hall in 1978, Jeff Albertson, an old friend, asks him if they can talk for a second. A seemingly affable Bruce says, "Sure," but Albertson is then admonished by Landau to leave Bruce alone. Albertson then asks Bruce, "Do you want me to leave?"; Bruce says "No." But after catching a glowering Landau out of the corner of his eye a cowed Springsteen suggests that maybe they'd better talk later. Albertson hasn't spoken with him since.

Most damning of all of the evidence are extensive interviews with ex-lighting director Marc Brickman. After serving Bruce for years he was unceremoniously dismissed, in a way not at all in keeping with Bruce's fair and even handed-reputation. Landau was said to have been particularly peeved when *Record World* commented favorably on the lighting in Bruce's live shows. Instead of being pleased that the fans were getting the full concert experience, Landau accused Brickman, a dedicated employee whose service to Springsteen predated his own, of detracting attention from the music. In good journalistic form, Mr. Goodman does document Mr. Brickman's later problems with substance abuse, but one still comes away with the impression that this shoddy treatment had Jon Landau's fingerprints all over it. Considering the time frame of that dismissal matched Steve Van Zandt's departure from the E street band, it also begs the question of Landau similarly influencing Little Steven's dismissal.

It is understandable if Mr. Goodman or *Backstreets* editor Charles R. Cross would be hesitant to engage in Bruce-bashing on the pages of what amounts to The Bruce Springsteen fanzine (which also offers *Mansion on the Hill* for sale through its merchandising arm). But the damning depiction of Landau is in fact the most compelling reason to read this book. It behooves any dedicated fan of Springsteen to look at all aspects of his career, no matter how upsetting they may be. For an artist like Springsteen,

who has used his songs as a vehicle to address injustice and official silence on important issues, to allow himself to be manipulated in the way portrayed on Mr. Goodman's pages is, to say the least, troubling. While this may not tarnish the work of the artist, it does take a bit of the luster off the image—an honest, upstanding image which has contributed to his enormous appeal. One can only hope *Mansion on the Hill* in some small way opens the eyes of Bruce Springsteen and his legions of fans, who can take heart in the claim that "the truth will set me free."

Mike Pesca  
New York City, NY

## I WISH I WERE BLIND

Dear Editor:

I just received my new *Backstreets* in the mail. As always, I was excited to get a new issue! I started flipping through it and found to my horror a picture of Larry Flynt holding a copy of *Backstreets*. How could you have this scum in your magazine?

As you know, Bruce continues to get new fans, which means new subscribers for your magazine. Can you imagine a young person asking their parents, "Who is Larry Flynt?"; and of course their answer would have to be that he is the founder/editor of *Hustler*. Is this the kind of role model you think should be holding your magazine up proudly? I'm all for free speech, freedom of the press, etc., but this guy is a slime.

Bad decision! I have been a loyal subscriber for years. I hope I don't ever have to be subjected to this kind of thing in your magazine again!

Steve Fisher  
Fish246@aol.com

## THE BIG MUDDY

Dear Editor:

Ever since *The River* I have been a huge Bruce Springsteen fan. The force with which he spoke to me was unlike anything I've experienced before or since. I soon began reading every word I could find on him and became a loyal reader of *Backstreets*.

Yet, despite all the passion with which I love Bruce, I have noticed a disturbing trend in the last several years. I know that

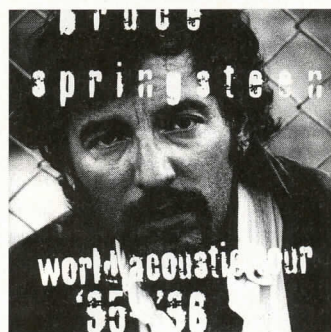
change is an important and necessary element in the growth of any artist; the changes in his private life helped give us one of his finest albums, *Tunnel of Love*. But since that period something has been amiss. The problem seems three-fold: there has been a notable drop in the quality of his work; a certain slickness seems to have taken hold that caters to the marketing division of Sony; and finally, Bruce seems grimly determined to undermine the very qualities that once made him such an exciting and unique rock artist.

The first point doesn't seem to need much explanation. While *Lucky Town* had its moments and "Streets of Philadelphia" was a moving song, the rest has been... well, I don't think I've listened to *Human Touch* in nearly three years. *The Ghost of Tom Joad* has a few good songs, but in my opinion it doesn't hold a candle to *Nebraska* (or *Tunnel* or *Darkness*, for that matter). The two newest songs on *Greatest Hits* were the weakest of the four bonus tracks. I'm not asking for every song to be "The River," but come on! "Without You" is pleasant enough, but the *BUSA* b-sides put it to shame. Can anyone remember more than three lines from "Dead Man Walkin'"? Was anyone that knocked out by the alternate version of "Blood Brothers"? By the way, every time you listen to this sub-par material, keep in mind that it's coming from the same man who adamantly refuses to release such songs as "Loose Ends," "Follow That Dream," "None But the Brave," and "The Promise."

On the second point, one of Bruce's most endearing traits has always been his integrity. Almost alone among rock musicians, he refused to play the corporate game or to let his creative decisions be determined by marketing. But in the past few years, a certain commercial slickness seems to have crept in. This may sound like a strange observation after the low-key *Tom Joad* album and tour, but look at the events surrounding this. Bruce decides to perform on MTV's *Unplugged* and changes the format to showcase his two new albums. Then he releases it as an album to promote his European tour, with the dates printed on the back cover.

Continued page 34

# OFFICIAL TOURBOOKS



## JOAD TOURBOOK

For anyone who missed it on the tour, the official tourbook for the World Acoustic Tour '95-'96 is available through Backstreet Records. A beautiful 32-page book, very colorful and packed with photos (including many shots of Bruce only found in this book), plus song lyrics, an interview with Bruce, and Steve Sutherland's story on the tour from *New Musical Express*.....\$20

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## '92-93 WORLD TOURBOOK

This 32-page color program features stunning color photos of Bruce on-stage and off, taken by Neal Preston, Annie Leibovitz, and others. Profiles on each of the '92-93 band members. Glossy cover, matte pages. Gorgeous.....\$10

## TUNNEL OF LOVE TOURBOOK

This lavish, oversized tourbook sold on the Tunnel tour contains dozens of striking color photos of Springsteen and the band, along with lyrics (including "Roulette") and Bill Barol's excellent feature on the album from *Newsweek*..\$20

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Down on the killing floor

## Feeling Jackson Cage

By John Wesley Harding

I first heard Bruce Springsteen's music on the radio one Sunday morning in Hastings, East Sussex, England. I can even remember exactly where the car was as we drove home along the front. The song was "Hungry Heart" from *The River*, and it was the BBC Radio One single of the week. It sounded so exciting it was almost beyond my imagination. I went to the record store and was disappointed to find that the record was a double album—disappointed because, being young, I was broke, and a double was more than my budget could afford. But Springsteen's sullen face on the cover seemed to be daring me to find the money to buy it. I had no choice.

Of course I had no idea where that record would take me—now, as I'm writing this, I realize it affected me in much the same way as music that Bruce heard in his early teenage years must have affected him. There have been a few moments in my life which made me pinch myself, but playing with Bruce Springsteen a few years back at McCabe's Guitar Shop is top of the list. Well, it would be, wouldn't it?

And that's also why I have now recorded "Jackson Cage": because the woman who put together the Capitol Records compilation *One Step Up/Two Steps Back* was at that very show and thought I would be a good person to re-record one of his songs. I've played them live of course: "The River," for one, and also, strangely enough, "The Promise," a song Bruce himself hasn't played in 20 years. But choosing one of his songs to record was tricky because, although I rate Springsteen, as may you, amongst the greatest modern songwriters, not all his songs are right for me to sing. I'm English, I'm not blue-collar, and some of those words may fall phony from my lips.

"Jackson Cage" was the fourth Springsteen song that I ever heard, being third on *The River*. In



Harding with Springsteen at McCabe's Guitar Shop, 6/18/94.

the liner notes to the *One Step Up* compilation, I say something about how the magnificence of the music on "Jackson Cage" slightly belies the quality of the lyric. Generally, music that sounds that good doesn't need to have a great lyric as well. And it wasn't until years later that I really *heard* the song, and it was like hearing it for the first time.

Unlike "Sherry Darling," "Crush on You" or "Out in the Street," the words of this song get right down to the nitty-gritty—the killing floor—but, unlike "Independence Day," "Point Blank" and "The Price You Pay," it comes on like "Sherry Darling"—all swagger. It's a tough trick to pull off. So for my version, I wanted to play it like the lyric seems to say it should be played, almost like a Leonard Cohen song. I transposed the big electric part to an acoustic guitar part, more Bert Jansch than The Byrds, and then let the lyric do the rest. If you're going to cover someone else's song, particularly one that's easy to perform in a specific E Street-style (the problem being that it'll never sound as good in a million years!) then you might as well find some new way to say the same thing.

Not to go back to Literary Criticism school, but it's the lyric that gives "Jackson Cage" the power. It's a song where "blinds" are kept closed "to keep from seeing things," and where to

open "the blinds"—to see—is an act of bravery. The bravery of these disenfranchised characters resides in being aware of the problem and trying to "see" their way out of it. In "Jackson Cage," the narrator—Springsteen? The bloke who's telling the story, I mean—is dreaming of a better world (even though he's reminded every night, or perhaps every morning, when he wakes up). We all know that the thought-dreams are the ones that bring you to the guillotine.

"Jackson Cage" is a picture of a world that is a prison, where a real prison—much like the New Jersey reformatory that probably gave this song its title—would be a cage within a cage. This world is hot and stuffy, with no privacy, simply a "Cage" (which always reminds me of that Dylan line from "Up to Me" where "The only decent thing" he does as a postal clerk is "haul your picture down off the wall near the cage" where he works). The worst thing about the "Jackson Cage" is that there are no guards, just yourself—your hand, your key. Despite the wasted motion (and how can any motion not be wasted, if the way you move gives you away), there's always just one more day—this is life, real life, without parole. The ultimate price? To be turned into a stranger, just as those in the song seem to be strangers from each other, in dubious sketched-in

scenery. Besides the non-descript row of houses, there is no scenery in the song, just "scenery," perhaps even fictional—written by someone else.

The lyrics of "Jackson Cage" are terrifyingly depressing. But the version on "The River" doesn't seem terrifyingly depressing. Why not? Because it is the way that the song sounds, the way it rocks, that is its own redemption and which offers the characters, and the listeners (and Springsteen, I guess), something that the prison-world can't. If there's music like this around, then it is worth something to me and you. It's what I found in that moment when I first heard "Hungry Heart"—and then throughout *The River*. It's why I'm living in San Francisco and not Hastings (and Hastings is a nice place...). It's why you're reading this magazine rather than *The Spice Girls: The Full Story*. The opening snare roll is the sound of a machine-gun prison breakout and those big electric guitar chords are the chimes of freedom. In a sense that's why literary-critical analyses of songs don't work: because they don't take the music into account. What "Jackson Cage" means is way more than what the words themselves mean.

When I listen to "Jackson Cage" do I think about the characters with no future living in the guardless prison of their own making? No. I think about rock 'n' roll and sex and celebration and escape. I think about Phil Spector, Bob Dylan and The Byrds. I think that the characters *will* see some sun, just like I do as I listen to it. Or maybe I don't *think* about anything: I *feel* something. The music is wonderfully at odds with the message and that's where the "hope" comes from. It isn't anywhere in the lyrics; it's only in the music. And that doesn't mean I don't like the version on "The River." That's the very reason I think it's great.

And that's why for my version, I went back to the drawing board. I had no choice. 🐾

GARY GLADE PHOTO



# CLIPS

**ALL THE MOVIES:** Word spread immediately that Springsteen was spending time on the set of Ed Burns's new film project, *Long Time, Nothing New*, but the question of what exactly he was doing there remains unanswered. Will Bruce appear in the movie? Has he been talked into doing the score? The latter may not be too far-fetched: Bruce has a title song practically in the bag with "Long Time Coming." . . . Bruce's inspiration from the silver screen for *The Ghost of Tom Joad* seems to be coming full circle, with a movie called *Sinaloa Cowboys* currently in production. The title is no coincidence, as the film is about "two brothers forced into manufacturing speed," according to the *Hamilton Spectator*. Filming took place in Dundas, Ontario, but the movie is of course set in California. . . . The *Jerry Maguire* connection continues to keep "Secret Garden" in the spotlight. Bruce is up for Best Video from a Film at the MTV Video Music Awards, to be held on September 5. And you can add a few more "Secret Garden" parodies to the list from last issue. One radio station, figuring that the song mainly appeals to women, put together a "Three Stooges" mix to get the men involved. There's also an "Ellen" mix, and a take-off called "Secret Roll-On," about a woman who wants her man to use deodorant. . . . Two songs from *The River*, "Stolen Car" and "Drive All Night," are featured in the film *Cop Land*, but don't expect "Three Stooges" mixes anytime soon.

**THE DAILY NEWS:** Rock fans and critics always love a good list, and though the year-end barrage is still a ways off, there seems to be an unusual proliferation of them these days. *Guitar World Acoustic* magazine picked the "25 Greatest Acoustic Moments of All Time," one of which was Bruce's "Highway Patrolman." The August issue of the UK music magazine *MOJO* lists their choices for the Top 100 singles of the rock 'n' roll era, with "Born to Run"—"a Phil Spector-like gothic onslaught"—coming in at number 18. *Rolling Stone's* recent selection of 200

albums, listed by decade—a "definitive list of the essential CDs of the rock 'n' roll era"—included two albums from the Boss, *Born to Run* and *Born in the USA*. . . . When *Details* magazine asked Ani DiFranco for something that might appall her fans, she replied, "I'm a huge Bruce Springsteen fan—I love him. That should do it." . . . The Springsteen feature in the July issue of *Life* magazine includes some of the most striking photos of Bruce in recent years, including shots of Bruce—as well as Patti and their dogs—on the farm in Colt's Neck. . . . And if those dogs appear to be in the peak of health, that's no accident. If the *National Enquirer* is to be believed (and why shouldn't it be?) Bruce has "hired a nutritionist to create a super-healthy pet food that he plans to mass-market. The rocker got the brainstorm after his own pooch got sick and was helped by a special diet." If it's true, even those dogs on Main Street may not be howling much longer.

**E STREET BRATS:** While Bruce is taking a well-deserved vacation from the road, some of his pals have been hitting it hard. Nils Lofgren and Clarence Clemons have been touring steadily all summer, even playing on the same bill on occasion. The Big Man is out in support of his latest record, a return to rock 'n' roll called *Get It On*, and highlights of the live show have included "Pink Cadillac," "Fire," "Saving Up" and "Spirit in the Night." Clarence also sat in with the Max Weinberg Seven on *Late Night* while in New York. . . . Despite his regular nightly gig, Max still finds time to hit the clubs as well. After having them appear on *Late Night*, Weinberg joined Mark Eitzel, Peter Buck and the rest of the Tuatara/Minus Five collective onstage the following night at the Mercury Lounge. The Mighty One drummed on two songs, also joining in was John Wesley Harding. . . . Even Southside Johnny, who had been keeping a low profile, has been taking the stage around his new hometown of Nashville, TN; his performances have included a salute to Chet Atkins, a surprise performance at a neighborhood coffeehouse, and a benefit for Historic Nashville. The benefit, the



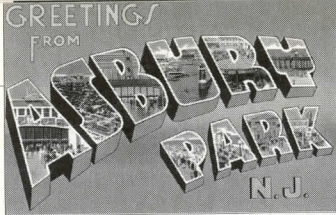
On the set of *Long Time, Nothing New*, with subscriber Jim Sullivan.

Second Annual Wrecking Ball, featured Southside with Bobby Bandiera as part of the evening's house band; the pair played a short acoustic set together as well. Southside wasn't the only Jersey-to-Nashville immigrant on hand—the Delevantes, with guest Gary Tallent on bass, also played the Wrecking Ball. Tallent once again produced the latest album from the Delevantes, *Postcards From Along the Way*. . . . Soozie Tyrell and Lisa Lowell have contributed vocals to several tracks on an album from Shane Jackman, *Rhythm of the Land*. . . . Steve Van Zandt was on hand at this year's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony to do the honors for the Rascals, saying in his induction speech that the first time he caught them was "the greatest show I ever heard."

**BOSS ON PARADE:** Fans who've been clamoring for Bruce to start rocking again may get to hear a really rocked-up version of "The Ghost of Tom Joad," though this probably isn't exactly what they had in mind: Rage Against the Machine has been covering that song in their opening slot on the U2 tour. As guitarist Tom Morello told MTV News, "It's not exactly in the same folk tradition that [Springsteen] plays it.... It's a song that has amazing lyrics... and we put a pretty rockin' soundtrack behind it." And such a different soundtrack that several Springsteen fans we've talked to didn't recognize the song right away—if they recognized it at all. . . .

Nearly as bizarre is Kim Fox's cover of "Atlantic City" on her Dreamworks CD, *Moon Hut*. . . . At one of her shows in NYC, singer/songwriter Patty Griffen performed an encore of "Stolen Car" for some friends in the audience who were big Springsteen fans. . . . At the last show of their European tour this summer in Marseille, Phish covered "The River" for the first time. If Bruce feels like learning something from Phish in return he might want to start with their open taping policy. . . . Dan Bern, whose self-titled LP was produced by Chuck Plotkin and mixed by Toby Scott, has recorded a song called "Woody and Bob, Bruce and Dan." The song, which traces a lineage of musical influence in Bern's typically bantering style, is not on his *WORK/Sony* album but was issued as a promo. . . . Bluegrass great (and Springsteen-influence) Ralph Stanley told the crowd at a recent show that Springsteen and John Mellencamp would be among those joining in at his next Nashville recording session. After naming a string of country artists that would be involved, Stanley had to get his son on stage to help him remember the names of the two rock 'n' rollers. . . . Speaking of bluegrass, Dean Sapp and the Hartford Express do a great cover of "Youngstown" on their latest release, *The Night the Titanic Went Down*. For more information contact Dean Sapp Enterprises, 2711 Augustine Herman Hwy., Chesapeake City, MD 21915 or call 1-800-246-3319. 🐾





**Mighty Max jams with Southside**

## The Max Weinberg Eight

By Robert Makin

In between legs of the *Born to Run* tour, E Street Band drummer Max Weinberg would sit in with Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes at the Stone Pony. For years now, Mighty Max has been working with two of the Jukes, original trombonist Richie "La Bamba" Rosenberg and trumpeter Marc Pender, in the Max Weinberg Seven, the house band for NBC's *Late Night*. But Weinberg hadn't played with Southside since the 1991 record release party for *Better Days*, which also featured Bruce Springsteen and producer Little Steven Van Zandt among other Asbury notables.

On August 16, 1997, Max once again provided the skins for Southside's bluesy vox. The occasion was The Hard Hat Concert, a salute to the families of the 1,000 construction workers who built the \$265 million New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark. Both the Max Weinberg Seven and Southside Johnny were on hand.

"Southside is playing harp better than ever," Weinberg says. "He's really a blues man at heart. I think he's growing into that. He's been sitting in with us on the show, and he sounds great." Since the Jukes have been on hiatus for a year, Max says this partial reunion was delightful.

The rock revue, which also featured Felix Cavaliere of the Raspals and Ronnie Spector, was the first event held in the venue's 2,750-seat Prudential Hall.

Weinberg, who was born in Newark, was impressed with the Garden State's version of Lincoln Center. "It's astoundingly beautiful," the drummer raves. "I can't speak highly enough of it. It was built with music in mind. My drums sounded like they were in a recording studio. I've been lucky to play a lot of really nice concert halls here and in Europe, and this rates with the best."

Having cut his musical teeth in Newark, Weinberg is glad to



*The Late Night-era Mighty Max*

see the volatile urban center returning to its soulful glory days when he used to see performances by James Brown and the like. "It had such vibrancy," he says. "It was a musical stop for people. Rock once again will be there. The inclusive nature of this entire enterprise was represented the other night with a really good rock show."

The Hard Hat Concert wasn't the first time Weinberg helped to open a concert venue. In 1981, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band were the first rock act to play the Meadowlands Arena in East Rutherford.

Weinberg says that his television gig has been wonderful exposure as well as a learning experience with some of the finest jazz musicians in New York City. But should Bruce once again reassemble the E Street Band, he says he'll be there.

"It's a unique, emotional experience to play music—any time, under any circumstances—with Bruce Springsteen," Weinberg says. "The bond between Bruce and everyone in the E Street Band is very strong."

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center will officially open on October 18 with a benefit gala featuring The Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra conducted by Wynton Marsalis, opera star Kathleen Battle, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Tony winner Chita Rivera, tap-dance sensation Savion Glover, the American Ballet Theater and the Alvin

Ailey Dance Theater. To order tickets to the benefit, call (888) GONJPAC.

### New Releases

I was pleased to receive new discs from a couple of long-time Jersey Shore favorites: blues-rock guitarist Billy Hector and surfer/singer/songwriter James Deely.

The former frontman of The Fairlanes, Hector has slimmed his band down to a trio on his latest effort, *Hard to Please*. No offense to the great players in his old band, but less is definitely more. In other words, more Hector—who remains one of the best guitarists I've ever heard.

Whether it be via Chicago, Texas, the Mississippi Delta or the good old Jersey Shore, Hector's blues axe will uplift the most down-and-out listener. Having paid his dues as the guitarist in such legendary Shore bands as Cahoots and Hot Romance, Hector's turn at the mic is rich with soul.

It's also nice to hear the sexy voice of Suzan Lastovica, who had to quit the Fairlanes a while back for health reasons. On "There She Goes" and "Just Why," she and Billy bring back fond memories of sharing the stage at Jason's in South Belmar.

Since then, Hector has played a few bigger joints, but he's never gotten the recognition he's truly deserved from the likes of Rounder, Flying Fish and other roots labels. The title of this disc is actually referring to a fickle woman, but it applies to the music industry as well when it comes to this impressive cat. Judge for yourself by writing to Ghetto Surf Music, P.O. Box 573, Spring Lake, NJ 07762.

Former Valiants frontman James Deely has recently relocated to California from Nashville, and his new record, *El Corazon Negro*, was inspired by trips to Mexico. Still, the album's dozen tunes are pure Jersey Shore rock—particularly the opening "Travel Light," which ends with a

line from "Born to Run," and the closing boardwalk ballad "Jersey Soul." Deely just might wake Asbury from the dead if he came back to play that one.

Deely's songwriting has become more visual and introspective on outlaw tales like "Real Good Reason" and "Patrick's World." Both his singing—these days Deely is sounding more and more like Elvis Presley—and writing are more polished, but he still boasts just enough raw charm to keep the mix interesting.

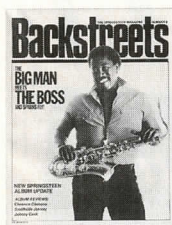
Deely has said that he dug Bruce so much he moved to Asbury Park from Virginia to be part of the music scene, but he had to split because the scene decayed like the city around it. With the Saint doing so well, perhaps the rocker will at least visit Asbury more often. Deely could certainly prove Thomas Wolfe wrong now that he has his own eclectic, roots-oriented sound and a batch of honest songs. Contact Big America Records, P.O. Box 5244, Los Angeles, CA 90296 or check out <<http://www.jamesd.com>> to get a copy of *El Corazon Negro*. ➔

### NEWS FLASH

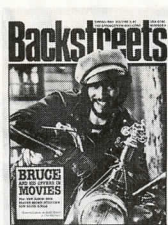
Bruce Springsteen took a well-deserved summer off from the road, but the dry spell officially broke on August 28, 1997. Springsteen took the stage at the Derby in Los Angeles, CA, to jam with the house band Jimmy & the Gigolos for five songs. When Bruce joined in on electric guitar during the band's second set, he had a baseball cap pulled down low over his eyes; most of the crowd didn't recognize him as the Boss until he eventually stepped to the mic. Jimmy, a.k.a. James Intveld, is a well-known Los Angeles musician who has played with numerous bands including the Blasters.



# Backstreets Backissues



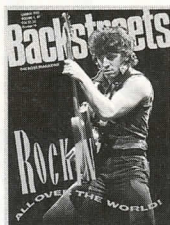
#8 Clarence int.; German discog.; new import singles.....\$8



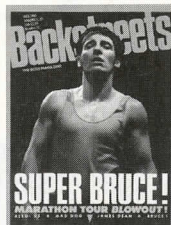
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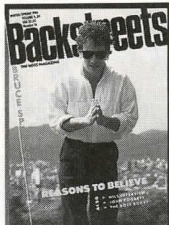
#10 Tour '84 Special: *BUSA* review; Japanese discog.....\$5



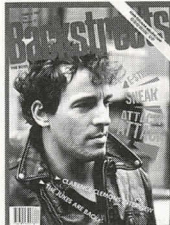
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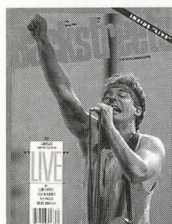
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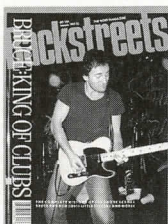
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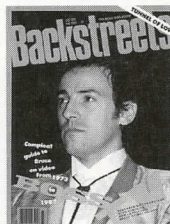
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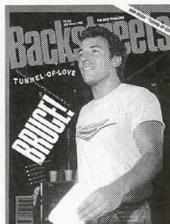
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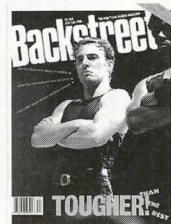
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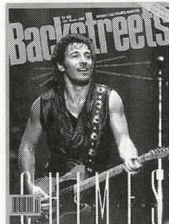
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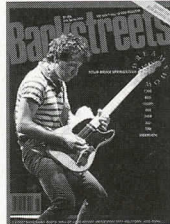
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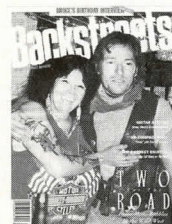
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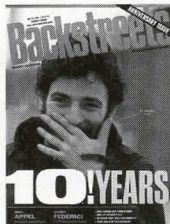
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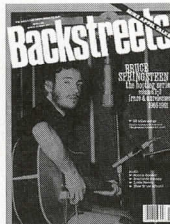
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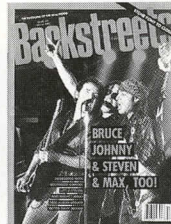
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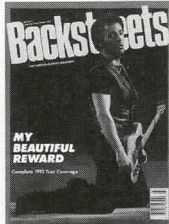
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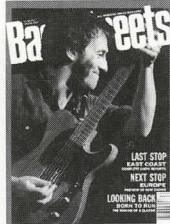
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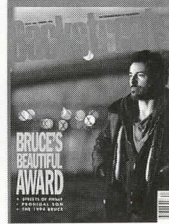
#38 Interviews: Max, Southside Johnny, Little Steven.....\$5



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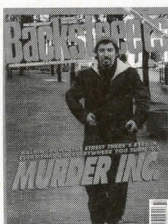
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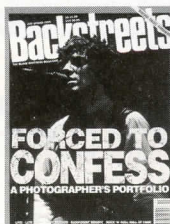
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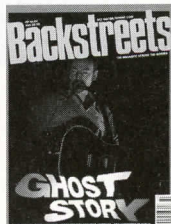
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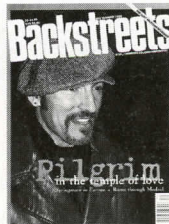
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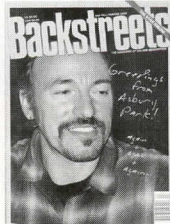
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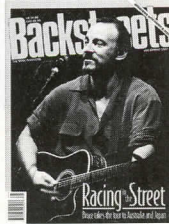
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# Postcards to Bruce

*One Step Up/Two Steps Back  
Pays Tribute to the Boss*



*By Robert Makin*

When Cheryl Pawelski was growing up in Milwaukee, her friends would tease her about being a Bruce Springsteen fan.

"He can't sing," they'd say.

She'd respond to deaf ears, "But listen to his songs, his lyrics, his music."

Sound familiar?

Well, Pawelski has found a way to awe whatever cynics may be left with *One Step Up, Two Steps Back: The Songs of Bruce Springsteen*, a captivating tribute she produced for the Capitol/EMI Records' subsidiary The Right Stuff.

"It shows some different sides to him," says Pawelski, manager

of A&R for Capitol/EMI Records' Special Markets. "It gives a different angle into particular songs that maybe people didn't hear before. It offers quite a few in-roads to Bruce's writing."

"He delivers a great punchline with every song," she adds. "Not a punchline that's a joke, but something that makes you say, 'Whoa'—then you go back and listen to the song again. Bruce is the master of that."

On the new double disc and its two singles, 36 different contributors recapture those "punchlines." Set for release on Springsteen's 48th birthday in September, *One Step Up, Two Steps Back* splits its title down the

middle for the two discs. The first, "One Step Up," features all "original" covers recorded specifically for this tribute, including the Smithereens ("Downbound Train"), Dave Alvin ("Seeds"), Nils Lofgren ("Wreck on the Highway"), John Hiatt ("Johnny 99"), and Marshall Crenshaw ("All or Nothin' at All"). Pawelski says she left the choice of tunes and arrangements to the contributing artists of the "One Step Up" disc.

She adds that she most appreciates the greatest departures from the original recordings, such as Paul Cebal's Caribbean-style croon of "One Step Up," the country train ride of Aram's

"Something in the Night," and John Wesley Harding's gangster-folk amplification of the depressing lyrics in "Jackson Cage."

"There's genre-crossing all over the place," she says. "That's part of the point, to show that a Bruce song can be interpreted into any genre and become a classic."

Ben E. King was one of the most joyous acquisitions for the project for Pawelski. The Rock and Roll Hall of Famer agreed to bring the Drifters-inspired boardwalk ballad "Fourth of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)" full circle, and had a great time doing it. "It took me back," King told *Backstreets*. "Bruce does what very few



artists do, which is paint a picture with words. He's great at that."

When King signed on, Pawelski immediately thought of her friend Dennis Diken, drummer for the New Jersey band the Smithereens, to produce the track. "We share a love of '60s music," says the A&R rep, who also represented the Smithereens while they were signed to Capitol.

"That was a dream come true," adds Diken, who assembled a 17-piece band for the recording that included the Uptown Horns and Smithereen guitarist Jim Babjak. "Ben E. King is one of the best living vocalists. Out of nowhere I got this chance to work with him. He was an absolute prince, the ultimate pro. I couldn't believe how humble he was to work with."

tar wash that works well over the lyrics.

"There seems to be a real wanting about that song," says Neumann. "There's hopefulness, everything is going to be all right. That's what I like about Bruce's records and lyrics. Some songs are like therapy. That song does that for me. His songs give us strength to make it through another day."

That sense of hope is what led Neumann to choose "Atlantic City," but the Milwaukee-based BoDeans have also covered "I'm on Fire" live. "I like Bruce a lot as a songwriter and a performer," Neumann continues. I like the simplicity of his songs, that heartland feel. Being a white suburban kid from out in the Midwest, it's easy to connect with what he's singing about."

Syd Straw's recording of

Bruce said, 'I really like that judge song.' I said, 'Well, you wrote it.' He didn't remember it was his song.

-Rebbin Thompson on "Guilty"



"When a vocalist sings someone else's material, which he has done for most of his career, it's a challenge to get behind the lyrics. He nailed it in a big way. He really made the song his own. From what I can gather, everybody on this album pretty much achieved that."

"Downbound Train" came very naturally for us," Diken adds about his band's garage romp, chosen by Smithereens' bassist Mike Mesaros. "Mike is the biggest Springsteen fan. He liked the imagery of the song. And [lead vocalist] Pat [DiNizio] felt comfortable singing that particular tune."

Kurt Neumann already felt comfortable with "Atlantic City," the first single from the tribute album, largely because he often plays the song in concert whenever fellow BoDeans vocalist/guitarist Sammy Llanas breaks a string. Rather than treat "Atlantic City" like the folk number he performs live, he recorded the song with a psychedelic gui-

"Meeting Across the River," a tune about a two-bit thief's last grab, was a long time coming. "I always wanted to record that song," she says. "It's one of those stored-up ideas I've had for 20 years. I thought about some other Bruce songs and almost waffled for a second, but then arrived right back on my own front door step convinced that this is the song I needed to sing."

Straw recorded the song with long-time musical and life partner Marc Ribot, among other well-respected players from New York's Downtown scene. Rather than mess with a good thing, her beatnik version keeps the male point-of-view intact. "I just love that little story," says Straw, whose own history has included a stint with the Golden Palominos. "It's like a great short film, by John Cassavetes or Sam Peckinpah, without a lot of bloodshed. I never heard myself sing the song until I recorded it, so I was hoping that it would work out all right. I figured, why mess with

# GREETINGS FROM...

## One Step Up

*Aram* Something in the Night

*The Smithereens* Downbound Train

*Kurt Neumann* Atlantic City

*John Wesley Harding* Jackson Cage

*Nils Lofgren* Wreck on the Highway

*John Hiatt* Johnny 99

*Dave Alvin* Seeds

*Joe Grushecky & the Houserockers* Light of Day

*Martin Zellar* Darkness on the Edge of Town

*Mrs. Fun/Tina & the B-Side Movement*

Janey, Don't You Lose Heart

*Marshall Crenshaw* All or Nothin' at All

*Syd Straw* Meeting Across the River

*Ben E. King* 4th of July, Asbury Park (Sandy)

*Paul Cebal* One Step Up

## Two Steps Back

*The Knack* Don't Look Back

*Donna Summer* Protection

*Joe Cocker* Human Touch

*Elliott Murphy* Stolen Car

*David Bowie* It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City

*The Reckless Chairs* Restless Nights

*Rebbin Thompson* Guilty

*Sonny Burgess* Tiger Rose

*Gary U.S. Bonds* Love's on the Line

*Clarence Clemons* Savin' Up

*Southside Johnny* The Fever

*Little Bob Story* Seaside Bar Song

*Allan Clarke* If I Was the Priest

*Richie Havens* Streets of Philadelphia



the point-of-view? The song is so well-written. It's really just a postcard to Bruce."

Serious Bruce collectors will be overjoyed with the obscure nuggets on the second disc, "Two Steps Back." The 14 tracks include rarities like "It's Hard to Be a Saint in the City" by David Bowie; "If I Were the Priest" by former Hollies member Allan Clarke; the Steel Mill number "Guilty" by that band's co-guitarist/vocalist Robbin Thompson; and "Protection" by Donna Summer with Bruce on guitar.

"I wanted to do something that was a departure from the Rhino tribute, *Cover Me* from a few years back," says Pawelski, an avid collector of Springsteen covers, who also assembled the second disc. "That's why we have this whole disc of previously unreleased covers and such obscure things as the Bowie track, which was only available on Rykodisc's 'Sound and Vision' box set. It's a *Station to Station* outtake from 1976."

The covers of "The Fever" by Southside Johnny & the Asbury Jukes, the Academy Award-winning "Streets of Philadelphia" by Richie Havens, "Savin' Up" by E Street saxophonist Clarence Clemons, and the Springsteen-produced "Love's on the Line" by Gary "U.S." Bonds are fairly familiar to Bruce fans. But much of "Two Steps Back" never has been available on CD before, Pawelski says. Hardest to find are the Clarke recording, which served as the flip-side to his 1974 single of "Born to Run," and Elliott Murphy's "Stolen Car," which was on a single briefly available in France. The disc also digs up covers of such unreleased Springsteen outtakes as "Seaside Bar Song," "Don't Look Back," and "Restless Nights."

Then, of course, there's the often-bootlegged "Guilty" that Springsteen wrote for Steel Mill, the hard blues-rock band he led before the beginning of his solo career and the formation of the E Street Band. Whenever Steel Mill headed south, they often played with Thompson's Rich-

mond, VA-based band Mercy Flight. Eventually, Thompson joined Bruce on vocals and guitar in Steel Mill. Thompson also lived with Springsteen and Steel Mill drummer Vini "Mad Dog" Lopez in their manager Tinker West's legendary surfboard factory in Manasquan, NJ.

When Steel Mill broke up, Thompson returned to Rich-

I always wanted to record that song; it's one of those ideas I've had for 20 years. It's really just a postcard to Bruce.

—Syd Straw on "Meeting"



mond, where he has enjoyed a career as a popular regional artist and the owner of a successful recording studio that specializes in jingles. He recorded "Guilty" for his 1985 independent album *Better Late Than Never*.

A year earlier, he had performed the tune with Springsteen at the Bayou in Washington, D.C. Thompson recalls, "After the show, Bruce said, 'I really like that judge song.' I said, 'Well, you wrote it.' He didn't remember it was his song. I said, 'We've been doing it a while. Let me record it.'"

"It was written after Bruce got busted for sneaking in without paying to get on the beach," he adds. "It's a driving tune. I like it because it's longer, over six minutes long. It's typical Bruce, where the middle breaks down and everybody does a lead. There's an excitement to it that, to me, has lived on."

The international licenses required to reuse many of the covers on "Two Steps Back" were a headache, Pawelski says. But the tribute has made her an even more passionate Bruce fan than when she discovered him upon the release of *Darkness* in 1978.

Although he hasn't provided any feedback about the project,

Springsteen did officially okay the tribute which will help benefit World Hunger Year (WHY). The New York-based service organization was founded in 1975 by two of his good friends: the late singer-songwriter Harry Chapin and radio personality Bill Ayres.

It's not the first time Springsteen has helped World Hunger

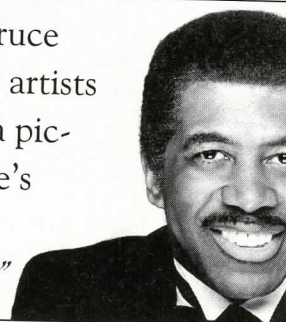
Year meet the needs of the poor, says Ayres, the organization's executive director. Bruce has donated \$25,000 annually to WHY's Reinvesting America since its inception in 1989. The program works to find and connect the country's best

grassroots hunger and poverty groups working to help the poor become self-reliant.

Living up to the convictions he expressed on the Woody Guthrie-influenced *The Ghost of Tom Joad*, Springsteen also gave a half-million dollars in t-shirt sales from the album's acoustic tour to some of the 460 model programs, Ayres says.

It took me back. Bruce does what very few artists do, which is paint a picture with words. He's great at that.

—Ben E. King on "Sandy"



"He was the first to believe in it at a time when many of my staff and board members thought it was off the wall," Ayres says. "He's been a good friend over the years. He's been so supportive. There aren't a lot of people like that in the music business. Harry was one of them, and Bruce is one of them, and I'm most appreciative."

Ben E. King, who often works with charities himself, says he is glad that one dollar from each sale of *One Step Up, Two Steps Back* will go to benefit World Hunger Year. "Bruce is a good person," says King, "so I'm not surprised."

A pair of singles, which are essentially five-song EPs, will also be available. The first features Neumann's "Atlantic City," plus four non-LP tracks from the Yell Leaders, Bumpin' Uglies, Dusty Wright, and Joe D'Urso & Stone Caravan. All are relatively unknown artists but huge Bruce fans, Palewski says.

D'Urso, a New York-based singer/songwriter who used to work for Springsteen's booking agency, had the guts to add a verse to "Bye Bye Johnny" about Kurt Cobain's suicide. "We started playing it after Cobain died," D'Urso says. "I didn't grow up being a Nirvana fan, but he was the voice of at least part of a generation. Another poor boy gets rich, has the world at his feet, then kills himself. I guess I'm the only songwriter stupid enough to add a verse. I'm glad they let it go." A different version of their cover also appears on Joe D'Urso & Stone Caravan's fifth independent album, *Mirrors, Shoestrings and Credit Cards*.

"Over the last 30 years, I think Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen have been the two most influential songwriters," D'Urso continues. "I saw Springsteen in

1980 when I was 15. At the time, I liked Elvis and Jim Morrison, who were already dead. I realized, 'Wow, this guy is not only alive, he's alive!'"

The lead track of the second single, which will coincide with the album's release, was yet to be determined at

press time, but the remainder will include an excellent Stones-like stab at "Fade Away" by the Wooldridge Brothers, Swedish star Rick Fors' "Club Soul City," Philly soul man Billy Mann's "Two Hearts," and an inspired "Thunder Road" by Greg Kihn.

"Bruce is the real thing," Kihn says. "He writes from the heart in the great songwriter's tradition."

As for Pawelski, she's excited about putting Springsteen's songwriting front-and-center on this tribute. "He's written so many songs that mean something to me personally," she says. "I'm grateful every time the man picks up a pen or a guitar."



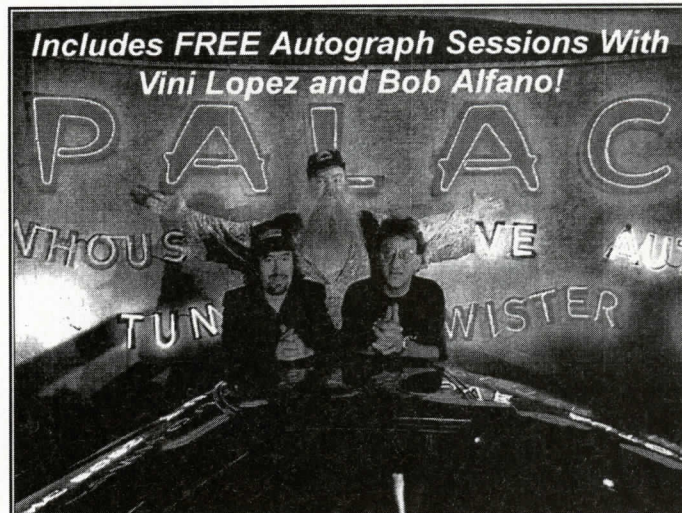


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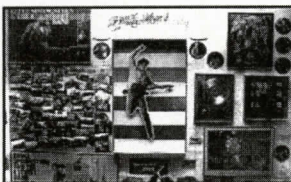
"Big Danny" Gallagher & bandmates in front of Palace Amusements, Asbury Park, NJ in the 1984 time capsule at Corvette Hall of Fame & Americana Museum



Vini Lopez at last year's Asbury Park Weekend

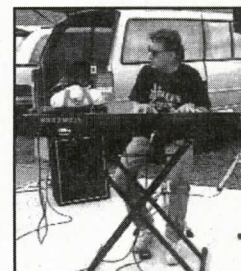
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Bob Alfano at last year's Asbury Park Weekend

the way we used to live, work and play and showcases the films, TV, songs, news events and personalities of each year. All together they form a wonderful time tunnel trip through our past.

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the original drummer for the "E-Street Band," and Bob Alfano, keyboardist with Bruce's first band "The Castiles".

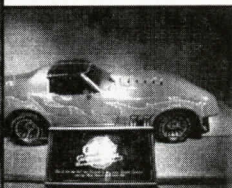
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# ONCE UPON A

WHEN THE *TOM JOAD* TOUR GETS TO "THE BOOT," IT'S TIME

**L**istening to Bruce Springsteen's music gives me a sense of both liberation and pain. I'm sure it always will. Twelve years ago, in May of 1985, my mother was dying in a Rome hospital, stricken by an incurable disease. The *Born in the USA* tour was about to hit Europe, and one of her biggest concerns—besides the fear of soon being survived by her only child—was that I might decide not to go to Milano on June 21. That would be my second European rendezvous with Springsteen (my first was a stop on *The River* tour, which I attended at the Hallenstadion in Zurich). She knew how much Springsteen meant to me, and she knew what I loved. She knew it just like any mother would. She had seen me waiting for the tour for months, but she also realized pretty soon that I was not going to leave her for any reason. She had mixed feelings about it. And so did I.

In my mind, I can't separate the memory of watching Bruce playing that tour from the death of my mother. She passed away on June 1, a few hours before Springsteen took the stage at the Slane Castle in Dublin for the *BUSA* European Tour debut.

Apart from cheering myself up by singing "everything dies baby that's a fact/but everything that dies someday comes back" from "Atlantic City," I couldn't stop thinking about the funny tricks time plays with our lives. Especially on the following June 21, when Bruce was singing "Bobby Jean" (a great song of parting and dissolution) on the same day my father would have turned 62. He had been taken away from this earth on that day 27 years earlier.

Since then, I've lived through many a June 1 and June 21. Many times again I could hardly hear my heart beating. On most of those sad anniversaries I spent those days listening to Bruce music (oddly enough, it's not the music I listen to all the time) or working on Springsteen-related projects (besides writing for different music magazines and editing *Follow That Dream*, the "Italian Backstreets," from 1986 to 1995, I also wrote books and produced a Springsteen tribute album). Listening to certain songs gives me a sense of continuity. It makes me feel like these are dates I'll always deal with serene pain. Certainly, as Jon Landau once pointed out, referring to a Bruce show he watched in 1974, this music makes me feel "younger." Even if in making me feel younger, the songs also inevitably reveal to me the passage of time.

Anybody who is seriously dedicated to music knows what that means. And it may sound like a paradox, but it's neither the typical Bruce anthems nor his top hits that give me strength and hope: it's always his darker songs that I turn to at these times. That's the part of his work that has the deepest value for me; that's the corner of his vast catalogue that I could always relate to the most.

Among the many reasons why I accepted the darkness of the whole *The Ghost of Tom Joad* period with admiration and respect was the level of intimacy Bruce was able to share with his audience through these quiet songs. That intimacy is paired with the naked poignancy of his lyrics. The only valid comparison would be what I saw at the two Christic Institute benefit shows in Los Angeles in 1990, when

SUSAN DUNCAN SMITH PHOTO



## BY ERMANNNO LABIANCA



# TIME IN ITALY

FOR MORRICONE, "O SOLE MIO" AND MIDNIGHT SERENADES.

Bruce simply sang songs that went straight to the hearts of the incredulous audience filling the Shrine Auditorium.

During the last two years, while remaining among Bruce's strongest fans, I stopped editing *Follow That Dream* with a sense of completeness that told me my duty was over. I felt at peace with that decision on this most recent tour when I saw a 17-year-old devoted Bruce tramp ("I was two when Nebraska came out", he told me) asking older guys to shut up while Springsteen was singing. And I also have come to accept that in the Internet Era, every young kid is somehow able to get the minimal information before I do. Furthermore, as another painful detaching from my past, I'm no longer with the same girlfriend with whom I shared ten years of "wild and innocent" passion for Bruce's music, traveling around the world from the Meadowlands to Barcelona's Plaza de Toros.

Still, where I could have found detachment I instead searched for more connection. Instead of losing touch I became an even more careful observer. I tried to imagine what kind of feedback the young kids get from Springsteen—those who didn't experience first-hand those unforgettable days when he was more a noisy and friendly driver than a shy hitch-hiker willing to tell you some stories. In these days of silent whispers and frequent "shut the fuck up" speeches spit on the microphones, I developed a closeness to Bruce that I never had before. Like a beautiful reward, a couple of simple, short but significant encounters with the ultimate singer-songwriter of our time occurred that both tested my faith and reconfirmed the passion I have for this music. By being able to experience both the "big show" of the past and the intimate concerts of this tour, by getting both perspectives on Bruce Springsteen, I realized how sometimes little things can magically connect into one full emotion.

## APRIL 10, 1996

Last year, I reached the Auditorium of Santa Cecilia in Rome (a symphony hall only a couple of blocks from the Vatican) with a framed copy of *For You: A Tribute to Bruce Springsteen* that I was going to officially present to Bruce thanks to the collaboration of people at Sony Music Entertainment (which issued this CD compilation of Bruce songs done by other artists in Italy). After the soundcheck I left it somewhere behind the stage and decided that the best moment to donate it to him would be shortly after the show. During the two hours that followed, I experienced both the magic of his performance (I had seen the show at the Zenith in Paris a couple of months earlier, a big arena that wasn't the perfect site for those songs) and the thrill of knowing that I was going to talk for more than the usual minute with the man who wrote "don't say nothing, if you don't have something nice to say."

During the show, but especially when Bruce was vocalizing on "Across the Border," I couldn't stop looking at Ennio Morricone—I wanted to capture any reaction to that wonderful melody from this Maestro—just few seats on my left. The esteemed composer of the original soundtracks for Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in America* and *Once Upon a Time in the West* among others, Morricone served as an evident and strong inspiration for Bruce and Roy Bit-

tan since 1980. That melody that Bruce was beautifully singing, while reminding me of those Morricone themes, perfectly matched a lot of Italian popular music. His voice and his falsetto were so similar to ancient funeral themes sung by black dressed Sicilian widows that I imagine Bruce got some of his inspiration from them.

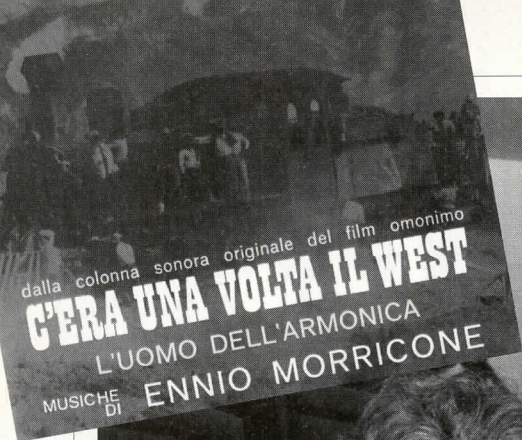
It would have been too much too pretend, in a show so rigorous and thematically strict, but for a moment I thought he would fill the set out by singing the Neapolitan anthem "O Sole Mio," which Elvis Presley long ago turned into "It's Now or Never." Of course he didn't. Instead he finished with a slow, dramatic version of "The Promised Land" (almost 20 years on the back of that song, you can feel the heavy load).

As the show ended, representatives from Sony were directing Mr. Morricone, his wife, and me backstage. We were shuffled through a door as Bruce sang the final "Mister, I ain't a boy, no, I'm a man/And I believe in the promised land," hitting his Takamine with his fist in front of the now-standing crowd. While I was being introduced to the Morricones, a soaking-wet and smiling Bruce came in. He asked for a towel and started talking with the Maestro. The two had never met before, and during the short meeting (only Jon Landau, Barbara Carr, Terry McGovern and a few Sony executives were there) Bruce said how delighted he was by that visit. He stopped and opened a little door so the music from the hall could come in. "That's my personal tape, that's the music I want to be played after these shows," Bruce told Morricone. "It's your music playing right now, Maestro," he said, smiling. While the notes of "Final Theme" (from *Once Upon a Time in the West*) vanished under the roaring of the audience asking for more "Broooce," Bruce and Morricone paused for a couple of pictures, then the two parted and I followed the people who were going to lead me to Bruce's dressing room. We had to take an elevator because Mr. Springsteen, they told me, refused the conductor's room in favor of a small room among the ones usually intended for the members of the orchestra.

Ten minutes later Bruce opened the door and let us in. As we were introduced he said he recognized me from other shows and tours. For those who might think it's easy to have a short speech in front of one of the best performers in the world, I might say I just took a deep breath and unwrapped the frame. The dedication read "To Bruce Springsteen—the brother that I never had. Thanks." I told Bruce how much work *For You* had been for me and I thanked him "for being my Woody Guthrie, my Bob Dylan, my Chuck Berry."

"Sit down," he said, while we were joined by the Italian singer-songwriter Luca Barbarossa, who contributed "Tougher Than The Rest" to *For You*. We talked about how corny and funny it is when an Italian singer, especially a rock 'n' roller, talks about his mother in a song, and how simple and natural it is when Bruce does it. Then Bruce surprised me by asking if we thought the show was too quiet, or maybe sometimes too slow. "That's what I got to do now," he said. "That's who I am right now." He began explaining his need to tell such stories in that musical form. He insisted on focusing on his audience that "now is giving me so much in return, after I think I gave a lot to them." I had gone to this show to meet a man whom





SPRINGSTEEN WITH MAESTRO AND MRS. MORRICONE, BACKSTAGE IN ROME, 4/10/96.

I wanted to thank for being so deep and so brave in revitalizing a form of music, a style that we can't call "in the latest fashion," to sing out for the poor. I had the chance to applaud the invaluable work of a performer who could still rock and sell stadiums but instead chose to struggle with an acoustic guitar to do what no one of his level does anymore, and I end up with this guy explaining to me why he feels sorry for not bringing the show that everybody wants but pleased by the "terrific response and respect that the Europeans are giving to my record." A record, I should add, that stands for our era just like Woody Guthrie's *Dust Bowl Ballads* and the early Dylan albums stood for the previous generations. I was essentially speechless at that point so I set on the table a vinyl copy of *Dust Bowl Ballads*, which includes such classics as "I Ain't Got No Home," "Vigilante Man," "Blowin' Down This Road," and "Tom Joad Pt. 1 & 2."

"This is a great one," Bruce said, picking up the album. He then wrote his name with a silver marker next to Woody's shabby expression, giving me another good reason to hang that sleeve on the wall of my living room.

## MAY 22, 1997, PART I

Thirteen months later, Bruce is getting ready for his show in Naples, the second of two shows in Italy on the second swing through Europe. A couple more shows in France, and bags are packed once again. The solo acoustic tour will be history.

An hour and a half before the show, I am lucky enough to be the only "non-working" person admitted to the backstage area of the old Teatro Augusteo. Bruce, who just flew in from Florence and doesn't have a hotel room (he will take a private flight to France after the show for two days off), is getting ready in his dressing room. Thanks again to the kindness of Sony Music Italy, I'm there with a few record company people, the small Springsteen entourage

and crew members. They are all very relaxed. Barbara Carr, Springsteen's co-manager who has been given a couple of bottles of good Italian red wine, seems to enjoy the place. I say hello to longtime-tour director George Travis, who was always nice to me when I was following the 1992-93 Tour to interview Roy Bittan, Crystal Taliaferro, Bobby King and the rest of the band. Then I start talking with Barry Bell from Premier Talent; he's Bruce's booking agent and the man responsible for bringing Springsteen's tour to Europe. We are interrupted when somebody is about to introduce me to Bruce, who just entered the little hall.

This time I actually believe he remembers me from the previous year in Rome. "Hello," he grins, pulling up the half-sleeves of his worn-out grey shirt. He dresses in his usual off-stage comfort style. Except for the combed back hair, he's not ready yet for that "great depression" look he would later offer to his audience.

His dressing room, a couple of meters away, is very small and full of papers and records. Five or six shirts hanging tidily on the wall and a pair of shoes make me think more of an actor's dressing room than a rock star's. Bruce walks in and out of that room asking for copies to be made of the setlist he just finished writing in his familiar handwriting. "5/22, Naples," it says. Then the songs chosen for the night: "Ghost," "Atlantic," "Straight," "29," and so on. For "Two Hearts," a song I always loved—which the night before in Florence seemed to me twice as big and important as it has always been (that's the power and the substance of many Bruce's songs)—he nicely wrote the numeral 2 and a little heart.

Later on, when he calls for "a little help," I find him trying to read the lyrics to "O Sole Mio" from a music sheet that seems very old. The song is almost an anthem for the city of Naples, written in 1898 and then, in the next century, sung by almost every Italian at least once in his life and by international stars like France's Josephine Baker and Elvis Presley. Few know that the author of the song, Neapolitan singer Eduardo Di Capua, wrote it in Odessa,



Ukraine, facing the Black Sea. He was on tour and dreamed about his city and the sun. He wrote the lyrics first, then the music, at the window of his hotel room. Years later, in 1920, during the opening for the Olympic Games in Anversa, Belgium, after the local band had lost the score for the "Royal March," they started to play "O Sole Mio" as the only Italian song everybody knew. It is a song of melancholy and hope, of coming home in search of the things you love. "You can't forsake the ties that bind."

"Should I sing this?" Bruce asks me and a guy from Sony, who has been trying to translate the first verse for him. "It means 'It's a beautiful day,' or something like that, right?" he asks. Then, again: "Do you really think I should sing this?"

I'm tempted to tell him about that show 13 months ago, where he met Morricone, and when I heard "Across The Border" and it made me think of many Italian melodies. But too many words would ruin the spontaneity of Bruce's request. I just say: "Yes. If you do that in this theatre, people will go crazy. Just do it, and you will see."

That's when Bruce starts looking through some Italian CD's he keeps on the table. I don't know if he bought them in Naples, or asked somebody to get them for him. Later on somebody suggested that maybe these were gifts from local fans. Two or three of them feature local popular music sung by famous old singers like Sergio Bruni and singer-guitarist Roberto Murolo, an artist that represents the Italian melodic tradition in the same way Roy Orbison or Chet Atkins represents America. Bruce then locks himself in his dressing room and, while preparing for the show, plays some old Italian tunes on a portable CD player. I hear him practicing. He sings the melody for "O Sole Mio." It's just a thrill to hear him singing through a door. No matter what it's singing, Bruce's voice is one that moves me—and this time it's not coming out of any speaker. I experienced a similar emotion years ago, in the dressing room of a TV studio in Rome, where Jackson Browne was about to perform a couple of songs. David Crosby was in town and came to the show, where Jackson literally taught him what to sing. Those two voices and an acoustic guitar played in a tiny passageway just blew my mind.

Right before Bruce was ready to go on, he wanted me to write something nice in the local dialect so he could warm the crowd after the first song, "The Ghost of Tom Joad." I tried to do my best then ran to my seat for the show. I never had such a wonderful appetizer before a Springsteen concert. I felt lucky, but at the same time it all felt so natural. The man has changed and so have I. Ten years ago, I would have been so filled with shock I would have needed a doctor. But now I only need some good music.

## MAY 22, 1997, PART II

There's a moment in the show that me and my friends call "the stool section." Bruce grabs a chair and gets even more reflective. He starts talking a lot. And singing his heart out. Four songs in a row represent the real window on his soul and on the latest album he decided to record: "Sinaloa Cowboys," "The Line," "Balboa Park," and "Across the Border." The man who used to get on the fast lane and run has today reduced his speed. He hasn't changed the words,

he just changed his tone. When he proposes, in the introduction speech to "Balboa Park," that "children are a window onto the grace of the world," he is simply repeating the desire that was shown in "Valentine's Day" and the discovery that he sang of in "Living Proof."

After this section, Springsteen disappears for a minute or so. People start screaming for some encores, the usual stand-up-and-sing section, when everybody is allowed to make some noise. This time the noise is unbelievable, as Bruce comes out to sing a familiar melody. "O Sole Mio" evokes other lost souls and many graveless soldiers that never came back from war but had time to sing this song from far away. Bruce doesn't know that, but emotions all look alike. It's also a song of youth and romanticism. Just like "Growin' Up," whose guitar arpeggio breaks the crescendo at the end of the Neapolitan song. Fantastico! Our country's youth and Bruce's youth all in one blend.

I'm not expecting more when, again, shortly before the end of "The Promised Land," I run backstage hoping I could say hello to Bruce again. He's exhausted but happy. I watch him disappear into

his dressing room. People outside are leaving the theater, filling the tiny square in front of the theater main entrance. As Bruce gets ready to leave, he starts joking through a window, sure enough he won't be recognized, so he can enjoy the crowd. Everybody in the crowd outside is singing while somebody notices the familiar silhouette behind the curtain. A chant turns into a roar as Bruce decides he better "say hello."

From that window, only 20 feet from the ground, he starts smiling at his fans. My point of view from the inside isn't that great, but I can see that he grabs a guitar and his harmonica, and almost unbelievably, decides to sing "Thunder Road" for the crowd below. I only see this fantastic picture in reverse, while everybody outside is singing and dancing in the street. I can only imagine what it must have been like out there.

But I'd certainly never trade that with the last memory I have of such a fantastic night. I will never forget the expression on Bruce Spring-

steen's face—one of the biggest rock stars ever—after that "serenade." As he turned around from the balcony he was beaming. And I won't forget how happy he said he was as he entered his minivan to head to the airport. His eyes can't tell a lie. His face, when there were only ten people around him, was a picture of immense happiness. Anybody who has seen Springsteen performing "Quarter to Three" in the *No Nukes* movie knows exactly what I mean.

"I stood stone-like at midnight" as I knew he was going to disappear in the wink of an eye. I was only enjoying that moment. But Bruce suddenly turned to our little group of people and friends inside the hall, looking for some reaction. Wishing him to be back soon was easy. I had to think for a second to formulate another sentence.

"I hope next time you come—whether it's with a band or not—it'll be a tour that makes you feel as happy and free as this one did." That's all I could say—I was speechless after that.

"I'm happy, guys," Bruce told me and the others gathered to see him off. "I'm totally happy. All I wanna say right now is that this thing made me happy. So long, be cool."

Bruce got the last word. I had no doubt. 🍷

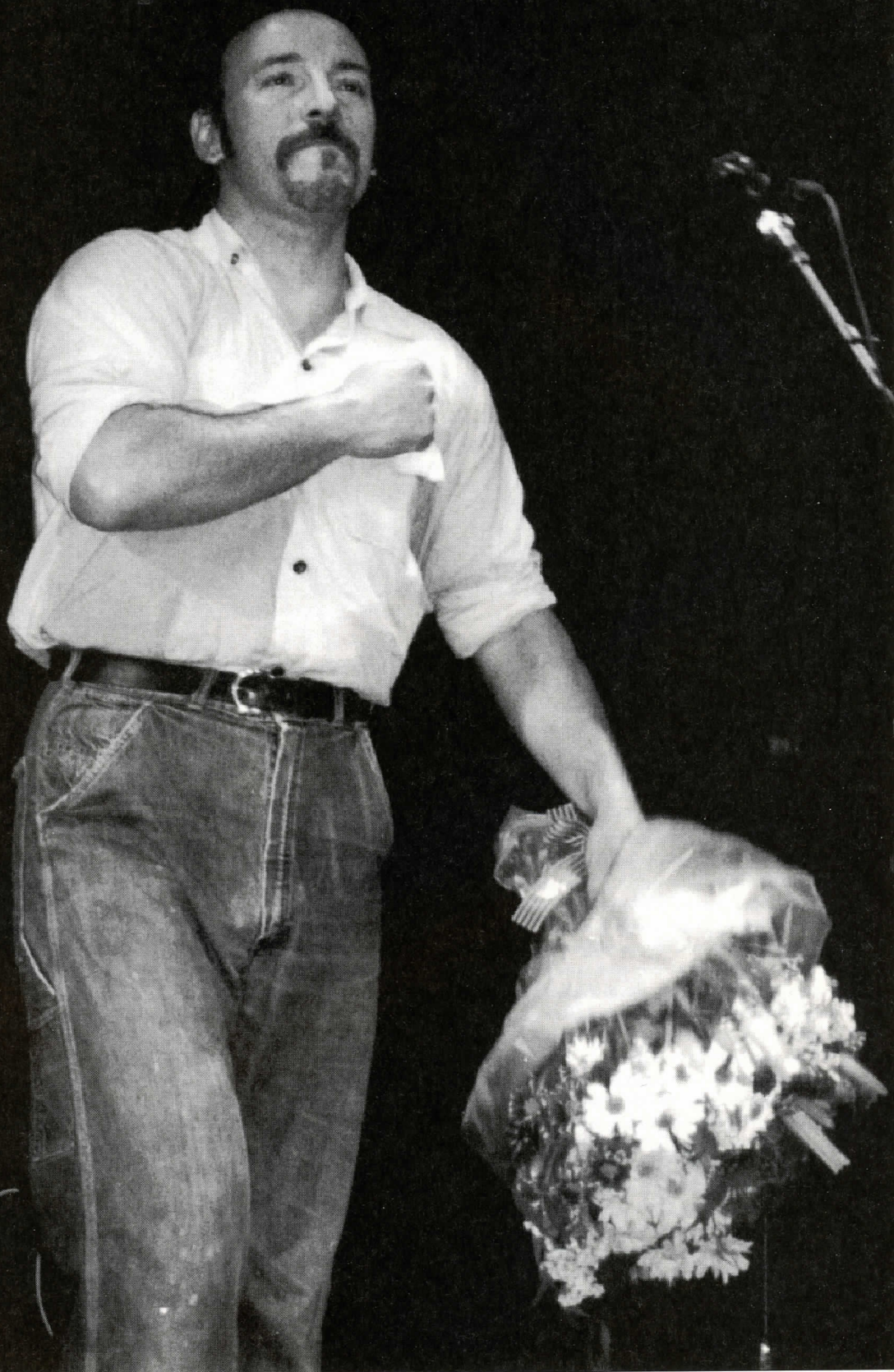
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Growin'/Bobby J.  
Working  
Hard  
No Surrender  
Galvan  
Promised



# SAINT IN THE CITY

**THE  
GHOST  
OF  
TOM  
JOAD  
TOUR  
MAY 1997**





# BERWALDHALLEN

STOCKHOLM  
The Polar Music Prize  
Måndag 5 maj kl. 18.00

Parkett Vänster  
Mittgång  
Garderob: Parkett  
Bänk 1

Plats 5

## 5/5/97 GRAND HOTEL STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

5/5 SET: The Ghost of  
Tom Joad/Thunder Road

5/5 NOTES: Springsteen began the *Tom Joad* tour's final swing through Europe with the Polar Music Prize ceremony in Stockholm. The award itself was presented during the afternoon at Berwaldhallen, while Springsteen's performance came that night during the gala dinner at the Grand Hotel. Springsteen has since chosen to donate at least a portion of his prize money to a program in Stockholm called Kulturskolan (Culture School), which gives troubled youths a creative outlet to help keep them away from drugs and crime.

PRESS: (Reuter) Rock superstar Bruce Springsteen shared center stage with a Swedish choir master as both men received the 1997 Polar Music Prize, dubbed the Nobel prize for musicians....

The award was presented by Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf at a ceremony in central Stockholm. Springsteen swapped his trademark jeans and open-necked shirt for a tieless tuxedo for the occasion.

The ceremony included a tribute to Springsteen from President Clinton, in the form of a message read by Thomas Siebert, the U.S. Ambassador to Sweden.

"In the U.S. of A. Bruce Springsteen is known as 'The Boss.' Well back in Washington I've got a boss too, and this is what he has to say," Siebert told the audience.

In his message, Clinton saluted the singer-songwriter's "great poetic spirit and deep respect for the roots of your musical heritage."

"You always seem to open new doors for us," the ambassador quoted Clinton as saying.

TOMMY'S COMMENTS: The Polar Music Prize ceremony and dinner event was broadcast on Swedish television. At the dinner Bruce played two acoustic songs, "The Ghost of Tom Joad" and "Thunder Road." In between he made a nice thank-you speech, using a pre-

pared script, where he talked about his life, his music, and so on.

Bruce seemed to be in a very good mood and seemed to be enjoying the Swedish choir singing old Swedish folk songs as well as "Fever." Not Bruce's song—though a Swedish singer, Jennifer Brown, sang "Hungry Heart" in a laid-back, soulful version. I prefer the original. —Tommy Jensen

## 5/6-7/97 AUSTRIA CENTER VIENNA, AUSTRIA



5/6 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Nebraska/Freehold/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Long Time Coming/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Bobby Jean/This Hard Land/There'll Never Be any Other for Me but You//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

5/6 NOTES: Bruce made several Vienna-specific comments: before one song he mentioned that he had been driving around town listening to Mozart, and he also said, "This is the home of Dr. Freud—who has helped me out a lot."

5/7 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Adam Raised a Cain/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Point Blank/Freehold/Red Headed Woman/The River/ Born in the USA/ Youngstown/Dry Lightning/Long Time Coming/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Two Hearts (with Patti Scialfa)/This Hard Land/No Surrender//If I Should Fall Behind/The Promised Land

5/7 NOTES: During the first encore Bruce was joined by Patti Scialfa for "Two Hearts." The first show with no songs from the *Nebraska* album since Red Bank, 11/22/95.

MICHAEL'S COMMENTS: Finally, Bruce managed to come to Austria for the first time in his career. Although the the venue is not best suited for concerts—Austria Center is actually a convention center—the atmosphere was excellent. The second show was stronger than the first, and although he played nothing from *Nebraska*, the show included many other highlights like "The River," "Point Blank," and "Murder Inc." The audience went wild as he introduced a "special guest," which turned out to be his wife, Patti, and together they performed a heartbreaking duet on "Two Hearts." Bruce left with the promise that he would

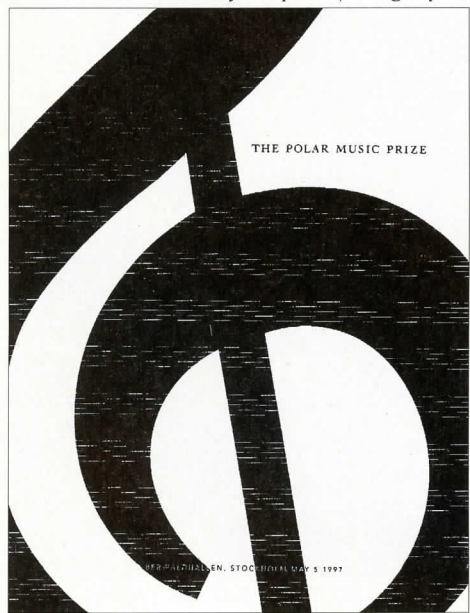
never pass Vienna by again and that he would come back soon. —Michael Hofschneider

## 5/9-10/97 SALA KONGRESOWA WARSAW, POLAND

5/9 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Adam Raised a Cain/Straight Time/ Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Nebraska/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/ Freehold/The River/Born in the USA/ Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Bobby Jean/ This Hard Land/No Surrender/Streets of Philadelphia//If I Should Fall Behind/The Promised Land

PRESS: "THE KING OF MOODS." Tomasz Lada in *Zycie Warszawie*: The Bruce Springsteen concert is certainly a great event. Anyone who has any doubts about the class of this artist should see it. Yesterday evening the Sala Kongresowa resounded in truly wonderful, clean, real music.... Entering entirely alone, accompanying himself on acoustic guitar and harmonica, the artist showed why he isn't called The Boss without a reason. Straightforward, tightly structured songs in this live context sounded exceptionally fresh. Freed from the sterile environment of the recording studio, Springsteen lets loose. What on the albums sounded flat and banal, on the stage turned out to be really excellent, deep music. It's not important that some chords he played weren't always precise or evenly held. Here the most important thing was presentation, and Springsteen is the master. Every successive song had a little story. The artist proved to be a talented creator of moods. He easily moved between despair and joy, seeming authentic and honest in both.... With each successive finish the storm of applause grew. This decreased the distance from the artist even more.... The telling songs, and his thanks for the applause in broken Polish from the very beginning built the sympathy from the audience. And what's more he succeeded beautifully in playing with the audience. In the breaks between songs, laughing and playful, he expertly fostered identification with the characters of the songs. Maybe it was just posing; if so, he did it perfectly, because everyone immediately believed him....

KARL'S COMMENTS: The shows took place in a beautiful theatre, the nicest venue I've seen apart from the Royal Albert Hall in London. On the first night the crowd seemed to want to clap along to everything Bruce played—this was infuriating during songs like "Dry Lightning" and "Promised Land." (This element was entirely absent the second night, when the crowd was about the quietest and most respectful of the whole tour.) "Freehold" was hilarious and most of the crowd seemed to understand it; Bruce opened the song by asking







**TWO MICS ARE BETTER THAN ONE: PATTI JOINS BRUCE FOR "TWO HEARTS" IN VIENNA, 5/7/97.**

how well people were able to understand English, saying that there were "a lot of English words in this song!" Bruce struggled with phrases in Polish through the night, to various degrees of comprehension. The most poignant moment of the night was as he closed his introduction to "Across the Border"; he said that Poland had suffered enormously and yet still throughout history had managed to find some element of hope, to continue, and he followed this up with some sentences in Polish that really seemed to touch the crowd. —*Karl Birtbistle*

**PETER'S COMMENTS:** This was the first time Springsteen played an East European (ex-communist) country after the Wall came down, so this was a significant event. Doubly so because it was the *Tom Joad* tour he brought to Warsaw. There is probably no other country in Europe where the *Joad* show can claim its full rights as in Poland—a very poor country with lots of people living on the edge. The country also has a very strict border, which is not easy to cross.

When Bruce came out he was rather tense. He probably knew that getting his message across would be extremely difficult because of the language barrier; English is known very little or not at all in the Eastern European countries. Before the show, books with translations of the lyrics of the *Tom Joad* album were handed out. Many tickets had been sold to embassies who then gave them away for public relations, so the average age of the crowd was higher here and the audience was very quiet. But, from the moment Bruce came out until he left the stage, there were constant flashes. Not only were cameras allowed in the hall, people were basically doing anything they wanted: taking pictures, audio recording—there were even people with camcorders walking next to the stage and filming—can you imagine? I've seen Bruce get pissed for much less, but he didn't say a word about the whole thing.

And yes, even in Poland, the land of the Pope, Bruce did his cunnilingus speech. He even said that the nuns must know about cun-

nilingus, because he could imagine how lonely it is in those convents. In his speech before "Dry Lightning" he made a little mistake. What should have been translated into Polish as "Kocham Sex" was translated instead as "Mitosc Sex"; so instead of "This song is about men and women, love and sex," the meaning of his introduction became "This song is about men and women... I love sex!" There wasn't too much reaction, because Polish is so hard to pronounce; not many understood exactly what he was saying. My Polish friend Tom had to translate it for me too.

There was no stage-rush after the border songs, which is odd for Europe. During "No Surrender" nobody sang along. Everybody was very quiet. This gave me a frightening feeling—at that moment I realized how far from home I was. "Streets of Philly" was the best-accepted and certainly best-known of the encore songs. Not surprising, because this was the first big hit after the Wall came down and probably the only Springsteen song really known in Poland. For me, the biggest reward came after the show when some in the crowd were asking me if they understood Springsteen's message. They wondered if Bruce had ever been in jail, because of the feeling he put in his show; they said it was as if Bruce knew what it was like to live in Poland before the Wall came down. —*Peter Inghelbrecht*

**VIVA ART MUSIC**

**solos acoustic tour**

**bruce springsteen**

Warszawa Sala Kongresowa 10 maja godzina 20<sup>00</sup>

Cena 150 PLN

Rzqd 3

Miejsc 30

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**5/10 SET:** The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Highway Patrolman/Freehold/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/The River/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Long Time Coming/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Working on the

Highway/This Hard Land/There'll Never Be Any Other for Me but You//Streets of Philadelphia/The Promised Land

**TOM'S COMMENTS:** For the second night running, Bruce proclaimed in Polish, "I Love Sex," instead of the intended intro line before "Dry Lightning." Mass hysteria, a minor standing ovation, and I sure as hell hope someone reads this and tells Bruce about it. I'm sure he'd get a kick out of it. —*Tom Randolph*

**JOSEF'S COMMENTS:** Fans were given a booklet with the lyrics to all of the songs on *TGOTJ*, along with Polish translations of the songs. When Bruce was playing "If I Should Fall Behind" in the encores, all the people were looking for the lyrics and it seemed like we were sitting in the opera and not in a Bruce show. —*Josef Schrefel*

**PETER'S COMMENTS:** This was the best Springsteen show I have ever seen. After the very quiet and maybe somewhat cool reaction of the crowd the night before, he probably wanted to give his all. Every single song was at its best. Bruce was very focused on giving his best and getting the message across, yet he also seemed very relaxed and comfortable. The first surprise was "Highway Patrolman," which he did for a Danish fan. "Red Headed Woman" was just great, with Bruce shaking his ass, howling, yelling, and dancing. Before "Dry Lightning" he made the "I love sex" mistake again, and this time the crowd reacted. Bruce must have known he said something wrong, because he joked about the Polish language.

The border songs were absolutely beautiful. They fit well in Poland, because this country is to Europe as Mexico is to America. A lot of Polish people go to Western Europe to work illegally and do the most dirty jobs: jobs in unhealthy factories, drugs, prostitution.... He dedicated "Across the Border" to the people because he couldn't even imagine how hard the struggle for them was. —*Peter Inghelbrecht*

**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**

**solos acoustic tour**

bruce springsteen

the ghost of tom joad

Warszawa 9, 10 maja 1997

**LYRIC BOOK DISTRIBUTED AT THE WARSAW SHOWS**



# 5/12/97 CONGRESS CENTER PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

5/12 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Highway Patrolman/Freehold/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/The River/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border/Working on the Highway/Bobby Jean/This Hard Land/No Surrender//Streets of Philadelphia/The Promised Land

5/12 NOTES: As in Japan and Poland, lyric booklets with translations were handed out before the show. The crowd was one of the quietest on this leg—probably partly due to the high language barrier—and Springsteen's performance was intense. The first appearance of the Celtic-style intro for "No Surrender."



# 5/15/97 MAURICE RAVEL AUDITORIUM LYON, FRANCE

5/15 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Highway Patrolman/Growin' Up/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/The River/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Long Time Coming/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border/Working on the Highway/This Hard Land/No Surrender//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

5/15 SET NOTES: The first appearance of "Growin' Up" on the tour outside of the Freehold and Asbury Park shows; this is the beginning of a string of such special reprises over the next few nights in France.

PETER'S COMMENTS: The big surprise was "Growin' Up." At first I couldn't believe it—I thought he was just playing with the crowd until he started to sing. People jumped out of their seats, everybody singing and clapping along. You should have seen the grin on the man's face.—Peter Ingelbrecht

CHRISTIAN'S COMMENTS: About 20 percent of the auditorium was empty; many people from Paris and other major French cities never got to Lyon because of the French train strikes. But what a show! The sound was great and Bruce was in a tremendous mood. The crowd was great, too—you could hear a pin drop during the songs, with no excessive shouting before or after. Bruce even commented on it by the end of the main set, saying, "I've hardly ever seen such a great crowd, they must have put something in the water."

While introducing "Red Headed Woman" Bruce said, "This is a song about cunnilingus,

which I believe was invented right here, so you must all be quite familiar with it and quite good at it." Then he asked, in French, if there were any women there with red horses—he got the French words for *horses* and *hair* mixed up. Everybody laughed, and Bruce didn't really know what he'd said wrong.—Christian Fridell

# 5/16/97 LE CORUM MONTPELLIER, FRANCE

5/16 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Point Blank/For You/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/The River/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border/Bobby Jean/Working on the Highway/This Hard Land/No Surrender//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

5/16 SET NOTES: Like "Growin' Up" the night before, "For You" makes its first appearance on this tour outside of New Jersey.

MORON FACTOR: A very rowdy crowd, with many camera flashes throughout the entire show (despite several requests from Springsteen to stop), and someone constantly shouting for a translation.

PETER'S COMMENTS: This was a hot show, especially because of the presence of a lot of people from the Spanish fan club. "Point Blank" was beautiful, sung with a lot of grace and feeling. The biggest surprise, "for the old fans," was "For You." This was marvelous—I never thought I'd hear this song live, and he had great fun playing it. Somebody had clearly told him about his red horses the day before, as he kept on joking about it during the intro of "Red Headed Woman": "Any red horses in the hall?" He made a big joke about his own mistake, and we all loved it.—Peter Ingelbrecht

CHRISTIAN'S COMMENTS: With the rowdiness of the crowd, Bruce cut most of his introductions short and did much less talking than the night before in Lyon. I think it's a pity because Bruce enjoys having this close contact with the crowd, so when he cuts down on the talking it also takes something out of the show. Nevertheless it was a good show. When Bruce introduced "Red Headed Woman," he started off by drumming on his guitar to make the sound of galloping horses and saying, "Yesterday before this song I asked if there were any women with red horses in the house. Apparently I said *chevaux* (horses) instead of *cheveux* (hair), so tonight I'll try to get it right." Which he did.—Christian Fridell

# 5/18/97 ACROPOLIS NICE, FRANCE

5/18 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Highway Patrolman/It's Hard to

Be a Saint in the City/Little Things/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Long Time Coming/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//You Can Look/Working on the Highway/This Hard Land//Growin' Up/Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

5/18 SET NOTES: "You Can Look (But You Better Not Touch)" makes its tour debut, and "Saint in the City" is played for the first time on the tour outside of Asbury Park.

GIORGIO'S COMMENTS: A beautiful auditorium, capacity of approximately 2000, though there were many empty seats. Elvis Costello was in the audience. The moron factor was moderate to high. A guy kept yelling while Springsteen was introducing a song, so that Bruce had to yell back, "Man, I need quiet!"

Bruce was in great shape and sang very powerfully. I finally got a chance to hear "Highway Patrolman," one of my favorite songs and one that really influenced the *Tom Joad* record—songs like "The Line" and "Sinaloa Cowboys" owe a debt to Joe and Frank Roberts. An even bigger surprise was next. Bruce played the first chords of "Saint in the City," exactly the same as on the record, while staring at the audience with a "Get this!" expression on his face. The house was gonna fall! —Giorgio Malucelli

CHRISTIAN'S COMMENTS: A great show with nice surprises, especially in the encores. The crowd was not as rowdy as in Montpellier, and of course quite a lot of Bruce's fans from Italy had come down. An incident for the moron factor: as Bruce was singing the last line of "Two Hearts" and taking his time before the last two words, somebody shouted, "than one!" Bruce stopped—he seemed annoyed—looked out toward where the shout had come from and said, "I can do it!"

Introducing "Dry Lightning" he said, "For thirty years I've been writing about men. First I wrote about men in cars. Then I wrote about men in cars looking at women, and that worked out pretty well too. Then I wrote about men and women in the cars, but not talking too much. That got accepted too. Then I wrote about men and women outside the cars, and that's where I fucked up."

The encores were really great. In the first nine or ten rows everybody was dancing on the chairs. The first encore started off with Bruce saying, "I gotta sing this one, because Elvis is in the building," and he played "You Can Look" for Elvis Costello. For the second encore Bruce played "Growin' Up," which was not on the set list, for his Italian friends.—Christian Fridell





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**TOULON**  
**ZENITH-OMEGA**  
20h30

en vente exceptionnelle le mercredi 9 avril

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SOLO ACOUSTIC TOUR  
LUNDI 19 MAI 1997  
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PR1x : FRF 235 - FRF 20 - FRF 255  
19970409/33 / 89770338691

general direct  
production s.a.

**5/19/97  
ZENITH  
TOULON, FRANCE**

5/19 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Nebraska/Saint in the City/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/The River/Brothers Under the Bridge/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//You Can Look/Working On The Highway/This Hard Land/No Surrender//Galveston Bay/Promised Land

**5/19 SET NOTES:** A somewhat controversial stop on this leg, with Toulon having elected as mayor Jean Marie Le Pen of the ultra-right-wing political party, the National Front. Some compared this show to "playing Sun City" (and some thought that Bruce must have scheduled this show specifically so that he

could speak out against the party's ideology), while others seemed to think that the only real controversial matter on this stop was the fact that the venue was simply too big. Seating roughly 5500, the Zenith is one of the largest venues on the entire tour and by far the largest on this European leg (most of the venues on this leg have capacities between 1000 and 2000). The show was not sold out.

**SAL'S COMMENTS:** No speech [about Le Pen], no political mention, *nothing*. Almost a rock show at the end. Hundreds of people rushing the stage already after "The Line"—can you imagine? And a lot of screaming, especially when Bruce was introducing songs in the border suite. I think Bruce was annoyed by this—he asked people to shut up a few times and also had to ask people several times to stop taking photos. But what can you expect in a sports arena that holds 5500? —*Salvador Trepát*

**5/21/97  
TEATRO VERDI  
FLORENCE,  
ITALY**

5/21 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Highway Patrolman/Saint in the City/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/The River/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Long Time Coming/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Happy Birthday/Growin' Up/Working on the Highway/This Hard Land/No Surrender//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

**5/21 SET NOTES:** At the beginning of the encores, Bruce led the crowd in singing "Happy Birthday" to Jon Landau.

**MORON FACTOR:** Very high, with many camera flashes and shouted requests.

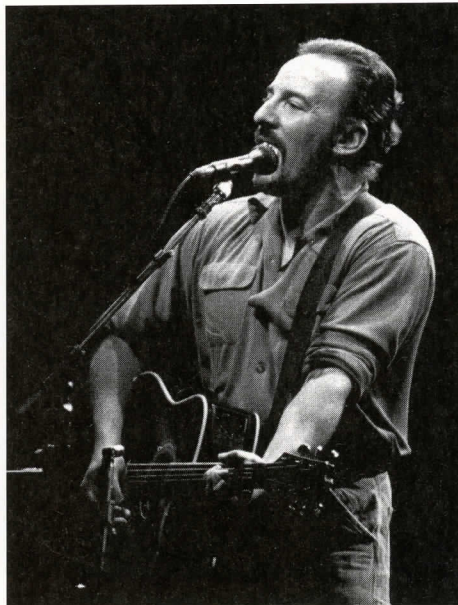
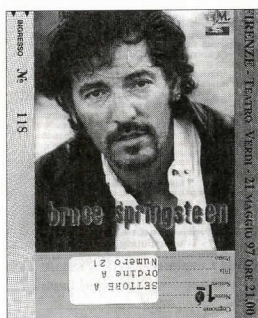
**SAL'S COMMENTS:** All I can say about the recent shows is that they were excellent—up to "Across the Border." The encores, though

everybody seems to enjoy them a lot, are shit. I hate it when people rush the stage and raise their fists, singing along like karaoke. "Stay hard, stay hungry, stay alive" has now lost any meaning it could've had in the past. And Bruce is an accomplice in this. He plays what the audience wants. It's a clear contradiction of what he says in interviews about the focus of this tour and these concerts—he comes to Europe and plays his popular songs to crazy, disrespectful and impolite fans (he prefers to call them "enthusiastic"). A friend of mine said after the recent shows that Bruce seemed like an "acoustic '70s Elvis" on the encores. I couldn't agree more. —*Salvador Trepát*

**MASSIMO'S COMMENTS:** In all it was an excellent show, and it shows that these songs have been carefully refined after more than a year of performing: new guitar bits here and there; new harmony vocals; a reworking of "The River" back to the standard melody line, but with a new intro, and a strange coda at the end (the "official" harmonica intro now is played at the end).

Obviously people rushed the stage right before the encores, but that's becoming routine everywhere Italian fans go. People kept flashing their cameras throughout the show. It was Jon Landau's birthday, so we were 23 years right after he discovered the "future of rock 'n' roll," and we all sang "Happy Birthday" before "Growin' Up." After the first encore there was a long chant asking for "Thunder Road" which Bruce commented on by saying, "Are you trying to put pressure on me?" before starting "Galveston Bay." A few chords into that song the guy right in front of me—bald and with a River tour T-shirt, who led the "Thunder Road" chant—took out a cellular phone and called a friend to find out what happened at a soccer tournament an Italian team was playing in. He then told the audience around him that they lost at the final penalties.

Bruce seemed to enjoy the crowd singing. "Working on the Highway" was the same as if it were '85, with Bruce stopping and letting people scream and sing the chorus. "This Hard Land" sounded like the chorus from "Il Nabuc-





co," with people careful to do the right crescendo (after all, we were at the Verdi theatre...). After letting people sing thrice the "No Surrender" chorus, he simply walked away, keeping on playing, looking at the audience like he was saying "you don't need me anymore, you can go on by yourself."

The fact that Bruce loosened up and rocked out made me think that, at least on some songs, it would have been better for him to have a band behind him. He's still able to rock down the house, even with his acoustic guitar. Still, Italian Bruce fans will probably reestablish a connection with him only at the moment when he comes here with a full band and with the idea of tearing down the building instead of making people think. —Massimo Benvenuti

**GIORGIO' COMMENTS:** I finally got to hear the acoustic version of "The River," and it was a big thrill. It's strange that he doesn't play it every night, for it would be the perfect example of how Bruce can play a hit without losing focus. It's actually the setlist that gives me reason for a thought. Too many times the focus is lost. It's been said that the show is divided into different mini-sets, and I agree with that. But check the setlist. There's a theme being developed until "Highway Patrolman." Then we get "Saint in the City," "Red Headed Woman," "Two Hearts": love, sex and party songs. Then we ship back into "The River" and "BUSA." Flipping back again to something like "Long Time Coming" and leaving out "Youngstown" just doesn't work with the border suite that follows. If you hear "Youngstown" or "Spare Parts," it all builds up to "Across the Border. If you party first, "Balboa Park" is good for a nap. The same thing happens with the encores: from hard party into "Galveston Bay." Maybe Bruce misses something of the old days. But seeing "Working on the Highway" played with the same moves as in 1985 feels awkward. If he feels like doing so, then he should reassemble the band. Don't get me wrong, I loved the shows, I just find last year's shows more focused and better shaped. —Giorgio Malucelli

## 5/22/97 TEATRO AUGUSTEO NAPLES, ITALY

5/22 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Highway Patrolman/Saint in the City/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/The River/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Reason to Believe/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//O Sole Mio/Growin' Up/Working on the Highway/This Hard Land/No Surrender//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

5/22 SET NOTES: The show itself may have ended with "The Promised Land," but the night's performance capped off with an impromptu "Thunder Road" played from Bruce's dressing room window for the crowd below.

**BERNIE'S COMMENTS:** The sound during the show wasn't right, with ringing feedback during the quieter moments. It was very annoying and quite a negative despite a solid performance with a very rambunctious crowd. The crowd started yelling to have the mic fixed, and during the beginning of the border suite Kevin stepped out to take care of it. The problem appeared to be feedback from a recording device that was patched into the house sound system.

As with all the shows on this leg, Bruce spoke to the crowd in their native tongue. Before "The River," Bruce told the crowd that half of his family was from Sorrento and that they emigrated around the turn of the century. The "Across the Border" prelude ended with Bruce speaking in Italian, "May your life be full of hope." The first encore began with Bruce humming and strumming along to "O Sole Mio"; the crowd took over for the chorus, and Bruce adeptly segued into "Growin' Up." The immigrant theme was presented again before



"This Hard Land" when he introduced the song as an immigrant, saying that we all want to shape the world where we want to live and to hold on to a little faith and a little hope, trying to find out where love manifests itself and put up a good fight against the other things.

The encores in Italy had really bloomed into a sing-along and people were having a great time, but the highlight of the night took place in the square outside the theatre about a half-hour after the show ended. Bruce's dressing room was on the second level and had a balcony overlooking the square. With a few hundred people standing in the square, looking up and singing Italian soccer chants, Bruce stepped out to the balcony with waves and smiles and was really enjoying the adoration of the crowd. The crowd broke into "O Sole Mio" with Bruce as conductor. He then briefly stepped back inside, emerging with his guitar and harp. There was magic in the night as the crowd quieted and heard Bruce sing, "The screen door slams..."; that was about all I was able to hear from him, as the crowd sang along over the street-noise to make the song their own. After dropping his harmonica into the



RENÉ VAN DIEËNEN PHOTOS



crowd and giving a final wave and heart-taps, Bruce stepped back inside—leaving the crowd numb and unsure whether to believe what they had just seen. I have seen Bruce perform in many settings over the past 20 years, and the feeling of love and the connection to the audience was never stronger than those ten minutes. I walked away stunned and muttering to anyone who would listen: "Never in my life... Incredible!" —Bernie Ranellone

## 5/25-26/97 PALAIS DES CONGRES PARIS, FRANCE



5/25 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Atlantic City/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Murder Inc./Highway Patrolman/Saint in the City/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/The River/Brothers Under the Bridges/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Long Time Coming/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/

Balboa Park/Across the Border//Growin' Up/Working on the Highway/This Hard Land/No Surrender//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land

**KARL'S COMMENTS:** The first night in Paris was fantastic—Bruce was in great form and clearly enjoyed the show. The crowd was one of the most enthusiastic I've seen, yet with tremendous respect for the *Tom Joad* tracks—clearly the crowd knew the music well, with rapturous applause for the new material. Bruce seemed to thrive on this reception.

But the biggest cheers were kept for the tracks from *Greetings*. When he played "Saint in the City" I thought the arena was going to come down, and the sing-along to "Growin' Up" was almost word-perfect.

During the encores Bruce moved to the front of the stage, playing his guitar like it was a machine gun and playing right to a little boy of no more than seven or eight years of age, sitting on his father's shoulders. The kid was going crazy—it was wonderful! After the gig the kid was picked up onto the stage by one of



ELLIOTT MURPHY HELPS BRUCE BLOW DOWN THE ROAD ON THE LAST NIGHT IN PARIS, 5/26/97.

Bruce's people to go and meet Bruce, and as they tried to get the boy's father from the crowd at the stage about a dozen people claimed to be his dad!

In the introduction to "This Hard Land" Bruce talked about how in France, as in America, people still use the idea of spreading hatred for certain groups in an attempt to get power or access to power. He said he hoped that the French could use their current election to fight this. Hoping it would not be "too over the top" he said he wanted to dedicate this song to the ideals of the French republic: "Liberté, Fraternité, Égalité." It was a wonderful show. —Karl Birtbistle

**PETER'S COMMENTS:** Bruce's comments about the elections going on in France and about people who are spreading hatred to get votes was a clear reference to Le Pen, leader of an ultra-right party that's growing at a fast rate, who wants the immigrants out. This man has similar theories and thoughts as Gingrich, about whom Bruce made an analogous remark at the '95 Bridge benefit. —Peter Inghelbrecht

**CLEMENT'S COMMENTS:** The best of the six shows I saw. Bruce was in a very good mood, and it was an extremely varied audience—it seemed like all of Europe was there! Everyone went nuts for "Saint in the City." No moron factor at all, but the loudest singing I've ever heard from the crowd on "Working on the Highway," "Growin' Up," "No Surrender," and "This Hard Land." —Clement Schwartz

5/26 SET: The Ghost of Tom Joad/Adam Raised a Cain/Straight Time/Highway 29/Darkness/Johnny 99/Nebraska/For You/Red Headed Woman/Two Hearts/The River/Born in the USA/Dry Lightning/Youngstown/Sinaloa Cowboys/The Line/Balboa Park/Across the Border//Bobby Jean/Working on the High-

way/Diamonds By the Yard (with Elliott Murphy)/This Hard Land/No Surrender//Galveston Bay/The Promised Land//Blowin' Down the Road (with Elliott Murphy)

**MORON FACTOR:** High. One woman was particularly disruptive, yelling to Bruce during quiet moments and not taking any "hints" from Bruce—"we both can't carry on a conversation like this"—or those around her. After several signals from Bruce she was finally escorted out during the border suite, and many in the crowd took that opportunity to rush the stage earlier than usual.

**KARL'S COMMENTS:** Highpoints of the second night ("For You," a very emotional "Youngstown" and two songs with Elliott Murphy in an eight-song encore) were almost eclipsed by the moron factor in the crowd. Some drunks thought it was 1985 again and that there was no room for acoustic music. Cries of "let's rock, Brucie!" clearly got to Springsteen, but he managed the situation with his usual professionalism. I never tire of watching and learning from him as he controls the crowd with a judicious phrase or comment.

As he introduced "Youngstown" he said, "I've enjoyed playing the music from the *Tom Joad* record as much as I've enjoyed playing any music I've ever written." This was greeted with tremendous applause, and his moving introduction really brought the border suite into relief.

After the gig, Bruce came back out on stage to sign autographs even with hundreds of us left. As he signed, some fans chanted for "Thunder Road"; Bruce looked up and waved them away with the back of his hand. As he continued signing, the crowd started to sing "Thunder Road," all the way to a crescendo on "You ain't a beauty..." Bizarre scene. Bruce didn't even seem to notice. —Karl Birtbistle

**PETER'S COMMENTS:** After the first night's Paris show, Bruce reportedly enjoyed the city until early in the morning, tasting the French wines; maybe that's why he looked like



he had a hangover on the second night. Everybody had expected something like the Asbury Park shows, but it didn't turn out that way. First of all there was the crowd: they were shouting and annoying (and the French seem to have a habit of coming in late). On the other side there was Bruce, who looked totally distracted. He kept going offstage to talk to Kevin, and struck a few false notes.

The most unexpected thing was that "Youngstown" was back in the show. Bruce said he wanted to do it because this was going to be the last show for a while (there was a shiver through the crowd: *for a while?*). He thanked the audience for being so receptive this whole tour, because when he first started he wasn't sure there was going to be an audience for it.

The stage rush happened unexpectedly before "Balboa Park." At first Bruce didn't know how to react to it, then he said, "You can stay, but you'll have to sit down." Everybody was squatting—this was difficult with so many people in so little space. Before "Across the Border" everybody shuffled around and Bruce laughed, "It's your own fault—now your knees are killing you."

But the encores were great. For the first song with Elliott Murphy, Bruce was only doing some background vocals and second guitar. Murphy has a great voice; they did a great job and both liked it. After "The Promised Land" it looked like it was over, but they came back to do an inspired version of "Blowin' Down the Road" with the crowd singing along. After the show Bruce came out to give autographs, and the crowd began to sing "Thunder Road"—everybody hoped for a repeat of Naples, but Bruce didn't buy it.

This show didn't start very well, but it ended beautifully. It wasn't what the audience expected, but it closed the tour (for a while?) in the spirit of the *Tom Joad* tour: pale beauty, darkness and suffocation, mixed with a little optimism for the future. —Peter Inghelbrecht

## SPRING 1997

	MAY													
	Vienna	Vienna	Warsaw	Warsaw	Prague	Lyon	Montpellier	Nice	Toulon	Florence	Naples	Paris	Paris	
	6	7	9	10	12	15	16	18	19	21	22	25	26	
	AUS	AUS	POL	POL	CZE	FRA	FRA	FRA	FRA	ITA	ITA	FRA	FRA	
GHOST OF TOM JOAD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
ATLANTIC CITY	2			2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		
ADAM RAISED A CAIN		2	2										2	
STRAIGHT TIME	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	
HIGHWAY 29	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
DARKNESS	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	
JOHNNY 99	6		6			6	6		6		6		6	
MURDER INC.		6		6	6			6		6		6		
NEBRASKA	7		7						7				7	
HIGHWAY PATROLMAN				7	7	7		7		7	7	7		
POINT BLANK		7					7							
FREEHOLD	8	8	10	8	8									
GROWIN' UP						8		23		19	20	20		
FOR YOU							8						8	
SAINT IN THE CITY								8	8	8	8	8		
LITTLE THINGS								9						
RED HEADED WOMAN	9	9	8	9	9	9	9	10	9	9	9	9	9	
TWO HEARTS	10	19	9	10	10	10	10	11	10	10	10	10	10	
THE RIVER		10	11	11	11	11	11		11	11	11	11	11	
BROTHERS	11							12	12			12		
BORN IN THE USA	12	11	12	12	12	12	12	13	13	12	12	13	12	
YOUNGSTOWN		12											14	
DRY LIGHTNING	13	13	13	13	13	13	13	14	14	13	13	14	13	
LONG TIME COMING	14	14		14		14		15		14		15		
REASON TO BELIEVE			14		14		14		15		14			
SINALOA COWBOYS	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	16	16	15	15	16	15	
THE LINE	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	17	16	16	17	16	
BALBOA PARK	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	18	18	17	17	18	17	
ACROSS THE BORDER	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	19	19	18	18	19	18	
YOU CAN LOOK								20	20					
O SOLE MIO											19			
WORKING ON THE HWY				19	19	19	20	21	21	20	21	21	20	
BOBBY JEAN	19		19		20		19						19	
DIAMONDS													21	
THIS HARD LAND	20	20	20	20	21	20	20	22	22	21	22	22	22	
NO SURRENDER		21	21		22	21	21		23	22	23	23	23	
THERE'LL NEVER BE	21			21										
STREETS OF PHILLY			22	22	23									
IF I SHOULD FALL		22	23											
GALVESTON BAY	22					22	22	24	24	23	24	24	24	
THE PROMISED LAND	23	23	24	23	24	23	23	25	25	24	25	25	25	
BLOWIN'													26	

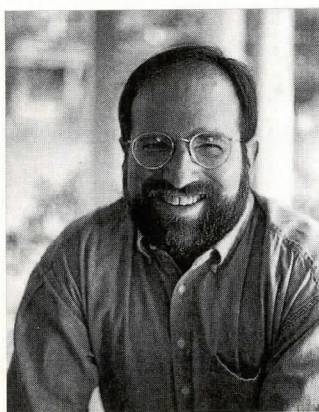
Tour report compiled by Christopher Phillips. Many thanks to everyone who's kept us posted over this lengthy tour—the help we receive from readers is essential! If the tour does start up again please keep us posted. E-mail set lists and comments to iamtomjoad@aol.com. We also welcome comments, reviews, press, ticket stubs, etc. by mail or fax (206-728-8827).

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# Better Angels

## The Backstreets Interview with Jim Cullen



Jim Cullen, author of *Born in the U.S.A.: Bruce Springsteen and the American Tradition*.

AN ENDURING IMAGE FROM BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN'S RISE TO SUPERSTARDOM IN 1984 is from a segment of the *CBS Evening News*. Interspersed with narration and a live snippet of—what else?—"Born in the U.S.A." are short interviews with fans. One interview, all three words of it, still sounds just as clearly as it did that summer: "Bruce is America." The subject, an unnamed, white, teenage male, confident in his assertion, gestured slightly upward with his arms as he spoke. Millions of others doubtless agreed.

But getting a handle on just how that identity manifested itself has never been as easy as some have suggested. Conservatives and liberals rushed to put Springsteen on their respective mantelpieces, but there has never been agreement among fans, much less definitive proof, that ownership belongs to either.

Author Jim Cullen argues in his remarkable new book, *Born in the U.S.A.: Bruce Springsteen and the American Tradition* (HarperCollins), that Springsteen and his music transcend mere politics and belong somewhere else entirely: in a continuum of American thought and expression.

Mapping that tradition—showing how "Bruce is America"—takes place over the course of seven chapters and touches on a range of subjects: religious and artistic traditions, political theories, and the Vietnam war. Springsteen appears to be a natural target for such an academic exercise, and Cullen, a lecturer at Harvard University and author of two books on American pop culture (one dealing with history and another with the Civil War), proves himself not only a keen student of history, but also agile in his deconstruction and analysis of Springsteen's work.

Cullen begins a chapter called "The Good Conservative" by laying out the tenets of a representative democracy as the Founding Fathers—and, maybe, Ronald Reagan and FDR before him—envisioned. A central argument set out early in the book is that Springsteen's work builds on these principles, extending them, translating them—perhaps unknowingly—for his audience. Cullen also examines Springsteen's artistic inheritance, going beyond the obvious influences of Elvis Presley, Bob Dylan, or even John Steinbeck. Again, Cullen reaches back into the annals of American history to compare Springsteen with Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman.

*Born in the U.S.A.* is a clearly written and often interesting look not only at Springsteen's work, but also at the works of others. It is not a biography: Cullen's work stems from original thought and scholarship. As far as written works about Springsteen are concerned, the result is unique.

**When did you get the idea to write this book? I mean, at what point between *Walt Whitman, the Federalist Papers* and *Darkness on the Edge of Town* were you struck by the idea to do something like this?**

Well, as I think you're suggesting, it's something I had in an inchoate way for a long time. I started to play close attention to Springsteen's work right around the time of *The River*, but the idea really came to me three years ago, when I started teaching at Harvard in the fall of 1994. My two previous books had a more academic orientation, and I thought this was going to be more of a scholarly book than it turned out to be. I worked on it pretty steadily from the fall of '94 for about the next year and a half, until I got a contract with HarperCollins and spent the second half of 1996 working especially hard revising it and getting it into shape.

**In the introduction you mention some uneasiness about the title. Were there others you considered?**

That's an interesting question, because the original title, right up until fairly far along in the contest, was *Better Angels*.

**Which you use as a chapter title at the end of the book.**

That's right, from Lincoln's first inaugural [address]. I liked the title *Better Angels* first of all because some people might recognize that as a Lincoln phrase, but also because it sounded like something from the early phase of Springsteen's career—you can almost imagine him writing something like that. Then my editor came back from a marketing meeting where they told him to forget it, there's no way, it's too obscure. So I made this joke, I said, "How

JANICE WILLIAMS PHOTO

By Jonathan B. Pont



about something like *Born in the USA*—you don't have to worry about *that* being too obscure." And gradually, of course, we began to think maybe that wasn't such a bad idea for a title. I wanted the subtitle to be "Bruce Springsteen and the American Imagination," but the folks there were afraid that it was too literary or too psychological. So they came up with this phrase "The American Tradition," which I'm sort of uneasy about, because 'the' American Tradition is a little bit dicey, especially in academia these days. But in the end, the book business being what it is, you have to push the envelope a little bit. And if you think of the American tradition as an inherently pluralistic idea, then I'm giving myself a loophole.

**One thing you write about on the subject of artists and tradition is the representational democracy. I'd be surprised if Walt Whitman, and Henry David Thoreau before him, experienced the same sorts of pressures that Bruce has—the money, the fame, certainly not the scrutiny—but Bruce has retained his common touch. And you might even argue that the Tom Joad era has been his most representational, democratic work. The typical argument against Bruce has been to ask what a guy in a 14 million dollar mansion in Beverly Hills is doing writing about any of these things. Did it also get harder for those you write about as his predecessors?**

Whitman and Thoreau never had to deal with success on the same scale that Bruce Springsteen has—it was never in the picture. However, I think there are ways in which you can draw parallels. Whitman, after the Civil War, had this poem, "O Captain! My Captain!" It's one of the few Whitman poems that rhymes, and it became a kind of "hit," if you want to call it that. After a while Whitman himself got really irritated about this poem: all they want is "O Captain! My Captain!" It was like having a hit song that you can't escape. And to a certain extent, by the end of his life, Whitman had become a kind of an iconic, representational figure. He began to become a myth, and I think he grappled with that a little bit. I don't think that's all that different from what someone like Springsteen went through in the early to mid-eighties. Of course there's a world of difference in many ways, but I do think one can legitimately make that juxtaposition.

As far as the money argument goes, or the materialist/class analysis, on some level I think it's sort of a dead-end issue. If you are a materialist about this in the Marxian sense, then it may be that Bruce Springsteen is never going to work for you because there's an irreducible dimension to it and I think that there's no point in arguing it. But if you accept the premise that you can take the boy out of poverty but not the poverty out of the boy—or for that matter, just an imaginative gift of projection: there have been plenty of artists who did not necessarily have underprivileged backgrounds and yet have been able to compellingly represent them. I just think it's kind of a dead-end issue. Either he succeeds in representing these people or he doesn't. And the basis for that success is a personal one. But it can also be measured in terms of critical response, commercial success, respect of his peers or whatever kind of measuring stick you want to use.

**Bruce himself has gone on the record as saying that, basically, the reason they got into it in the first place was to get money and to get girls.**

People argue about what it means to be an American, or what the nature of American history is, or what's part of our past and what isn't. But getting rich has always been a matter of basic consensus in American life. It's very hard to

escape that or deny that, and I don't think Springsteen has ever had much interest in doing so.

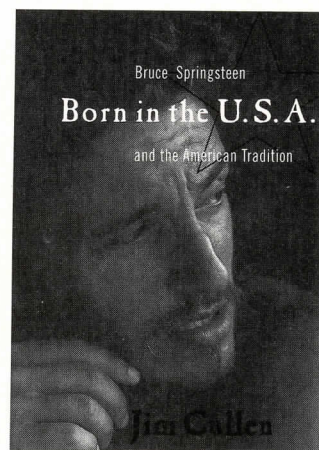
**Early on in the book you wrote: "Bruce Springsteen is no politician, nor did he seem to know very much about his republican inheritance." Then below you quote Springsteen from 1995 saying, "They basically tried to co-opt every image that was American, including me. I wanted to stake my own claim to those images and put forth my own ideas about them." I thought about the big stadium shows in 1985: you get into the ballpark and the first thing you see is this gargantuan American flag behind the stage. As if Bruce were saying, "You know what? It's my flag too, and for the next three hours or so I'm going to show you how and why." To me, in essence, that's sort of stealing the flag back from the "big R"-Republicans. And that leads me in turn to believe that he does have a clue about what you wrote as his "republican inheritance." So the flag, while it's a slam-dunk as an image, wasn't just a prop.**

I see your point. Maybe I'm guilty of some imprecision in that particular context, because I think you're right, I think he did have a clue and I think that that quote suggests that he has a clue. But I would say two things about that. One is that the quote in '95 is something that he's talking about retrospectively, ten years later, when he had made sense of the experience. When he was actually in the middle of that experience, as far as I could tell, there was a lot of confusion about how he should respond. But that doesn't address your other point about the fact that the flag was there and it was there before the whole Reagan thing blew up. I guess what I meant by that phrase was in very specific sense, an ideological concept called republicanism that can be traced back, and so on. But I do think you're right.

**When I read the book I thought, what if Bruce is keenly aware and just doesn't let on? Maybe not in the academic sense, as in, "Okay, I'm going to go back and write something based on Lincoln's first inaugural address"; but from all the evidence you've laid out he could have a clue about this stuff.**

I've tried very hard not to cross a line here, to purport to know what Bruce Springsteen is really thinking at any given point. It may well be that I've unconsciously crossed that line, but from what I can tell, the man who gives interviews in 1992 is a very different person from the one who did so in 1972. In terms of his diction, his sense of detachment, his maturity. A lot of that is what you'd expect—you get older, you get wiser—but I also think there is a quantum leap in sophistication. Maybe some of that is Jon Landau's tutelage, although I think that there are definite limits to how far you can go with that. You pick up *Tom Joad* and it's got a bibliography, for God's sake. I can't think of another rock 'n' roll record that's ever had that. So I do think that something happened to this guy. That Springsteen became much more able to explain himself, both to himself and to other people. That's a judgment that I've made that I perhaps never laid out as such but definitely

In a very specific, narrow sense, Springsteen is a more disciplined, focused and even better songwriter than Dylan. I don't think he has ever been or could ever be what Dylan was in 1965. Or what Elvis Presley was in 1955.





guides the book. It especially shows up in the chapters on gender and religious material, where you really see someone move from unconscious and reflexive imagery, decisions and so on, to someone who seems very aware of exactly what it is that he's doing—because otherwise it just seems too coincidental.

***I really enjoyed much of that kind of commentary in your book—especially about some of the Human Touch material, because that record is underrated in some ways. Besides the issues of gender and sex, I also got to thinking that Human Touch, more perhaps than any other of his albums, is a “black music” record. It’s much more soulful than anything else he’s done, even though it’s got that sheen.***

Right. And I think that when Sam Moore shows up on that record, it's because Bruce Springsteen knows who Sam Moore is and what it means to have Sam Moore play on it. And to write a song like “Man’s Job,” which echoes “Soul Man” in so many ways: I don’t have a smoking gun that says this is a guy who has a sense of history, but it sure seems that way.

***Some of your observations about Bruce’s lyrics—“Johnny 99” comes to mind, and certainly “Man’s Job”—really make for compelling, thought-provoking reading. I listened to “The New Timer” last night, really listened to it for the first time in a long time and got a lot more out of it once again. Did the points that you make in the book about the lyrics occur to you casually as a fan, or did***

***you have to make the decision to sit down and work, as a chronicler, with repeated listenings?***

Somewhat to my surprise it really ended up becoming a working process. I had some ideas about some songs, but inevitably there are dots that have to be connected and in the process of going through that you’re forced to listen to these things. A song like “The New Timer” is not one that I ever paid much attention to until it was time to write about this album, to make sense of this record which had come out in the middle of the writing of the book. It was only when I was sitting down with it, trying to make sense of it in an active way that many of the observations that I make in the book really jelled. Some of them are long-standing points that represent decided feelings that I’ve had for a long time, but many, if indeed not most, emerged from the writing of the book.

***Did you approach the Springsteen organization? Would it have helped to interview Bruce in the making of this book?***

To this day I find myself thinking about those things, the choices that I made and the way I handled it. First of all my doctoral dissertation, on the way the Civil War is portrayed in popular culture, used a lot of stuff: a lot of song lyrics, lines from movies, pictures and so on. It proved to be an enormous headache in terms of permissions and stuff—it was the kind of thing that really kept me up all night. So the very first step I took with this book was to write a letter to Barbara Carr saying that I’m thinking about doing this book, but I’m not sure I even want to get started if this is

going to be an obstacle. She called me back and said, “Don’t worry about it.” And of course my initial response to that was “Can we get that in writing?” But I held my tongue because I recognized the spirit in which she was saying that, and I was just going to have to go on faith. But I had that, and so I decided to go forward.

But as far as taking steps to get closer to the Springsteen camp and to get access to Springsteen—I decided that if I had a contribution to make to the conversation about Bruce Springsteen it was going to be from the outside, from an outsider’s perspective. And because this is a work about the work, I really wanted to discuss it on that basis. So I made the decision not to ask Springsteen or the Springsteen people. I don’t know if I had asked whether they would have said yes or not, and I don’t know whether this would have been a better book had I done so. At some level it’s hard to believe that I wouldn’t have learned *something* from the experience. But I just went with a gut feeling here that there’s a kind of purity about trusting the art and not the artist and making the fandom part of the story as well as the scholarship. And so that’s how I played my hand. That’s how I feel about it—I played this hand. Maybe I should have upped the ante, I don’t know.

***It’s always been frustrating for me to read interviews with Bruce, wondering why he doesn’t explain his music any better. And then I think, what do I need explained? What more do I want to hear?***

If you had Bruce Springsteen on the phone right now, you could talk to him for hours and hours and still have questions when you were done. This is a book by a guy in his bedroom whose relationship was with the records. There are many Bruce Springsteens—there’s the concert attraction, there’s the media celebrity. This particular Bruce Springsteen is the recording artist.

***Did you send the camp a copy of the book?***

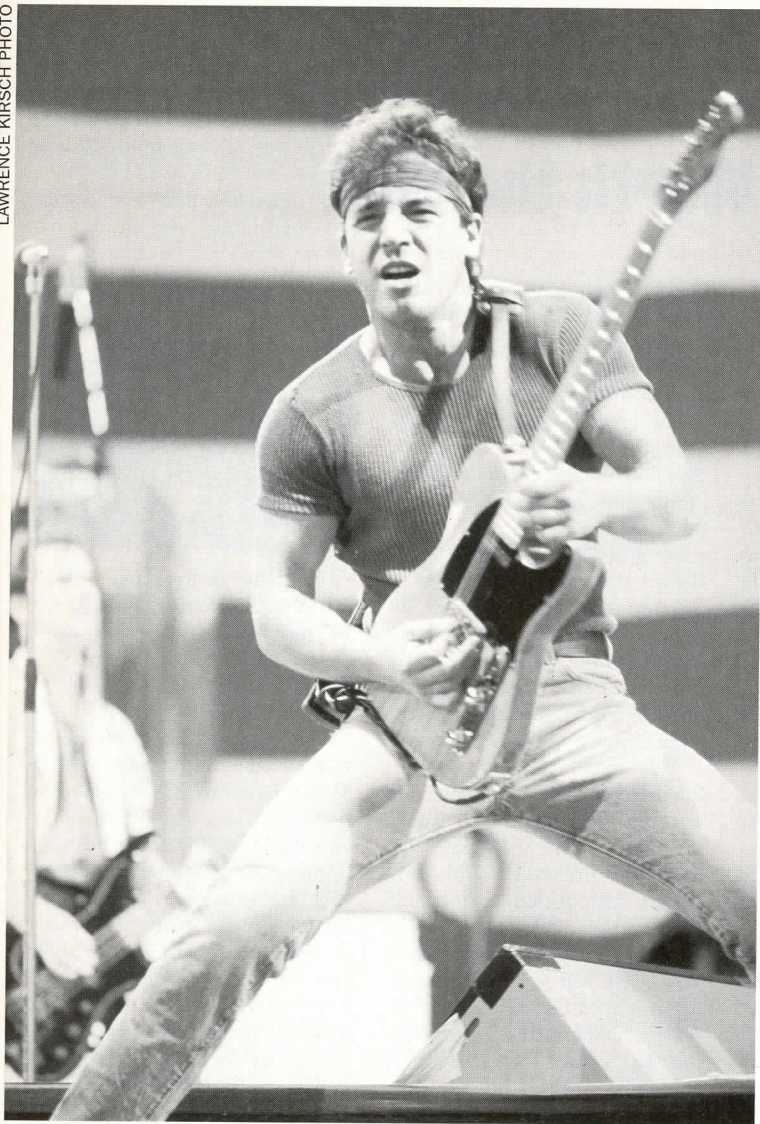
I have, and that’s another one of these things: I can’t tell you that I don’t wish that I would get a call or a letter or something saying “good job,” or something like that. I haven’t heard anything. I should say that in a very important way those folks have spoken with their actions rather than their words, like waiving fees for permissions for lyrics as well as pictures. In some sense that feels like a big vote of confidence, though I don’t want to imply a sanction where there is none—it is, anyway, a real gesture that means something to me. I hear indirectly. My editor had lunch with Dave Marsh, and I don’t think he loves everything about the book, but I think it’s okay with him. Greil Marcus, to whom I sent the book, tells me they’re talking it up over there. I should also say, though, that from what I understand, Springsteen declined getting involved with HarperCollins to promote the book, I think in part out of loyalty to Marsh. Which I accept and understand, but again I don’t want to even claim that I know what they’re thinking or the basis of any decisions that they made, because in truth I just don’t know. The truth is I don’t have to know. Because once again that’s really not what this is about, and if I never meet Bruce Springsteen, at some level that’s almost better.

***Greil Marcus is appropriate in some senses because he’s the only one who has really before you attempted anything on this level. Was he helpful in any way?***

Well, the primary way he was helpful was in giving me the inspiration for this book. I mean, as I’m sure you recognize, his presence suffuses this book. He’s a kind of model for a lot of what I’ve done, though I didn’t get in touch with

If Dylan is Beethoven,  
Springsteen is Brahms.  
There’s an awful lot to be said  
for being Brahms. For my  
money, it’s Springsteen’s stuff  
I’d want to have on a desert  
island or buried in my tomb as  
I’m going to the great beyond.





him until after the book was finished. I sent him the galleys and got a nice note back from him. The funny thing is that his *Invisible Republic* came out around the same time as this book, so we were reviewed together a few times—which felt to me like the rookie was on the playing field with the legend.

**How is history going to remember Springsteen? Abraham Lincoln saved the Union, Elvis and Dylan shaped popular culture in a way that hadn't been done before. What about Bruce?**

My initial temptation is to respond with, "Damned if I know!" Especially because this is something I've written about: my first book was really just about how history is up for grabs and is constantly being interpreted. My guess about Bruce Springsteen is that he doesn't spend a lot of time thinking or worrying about how things are going to look. Actually, I'm not sure that's true—I've heard anecdotally, I'm sure you have too, about personal foibles and stuff. But I guess what I'm trying to say is that I look on Usenet groups on the Internet and people are fretting about whether people care enough about Springsteen or whether he is still relevant, and about references in the media. I don't think he spends a lot of time fussing about that; if he did, he never would make records like *The Ghost*

of Tom Joad. To try to answer the question directly, and I think I do in the book too, I think he's a kind of "good conservative": he doesn't have the kind of Promethean originality that you associate with someone like Dylan or Elvis, but what he is is an unusually apt sort of person who can preserve, reinvent, and extend a lot of what's come before. If Dylan is Beethoven, Springsteen is Brahms. Actually I think, in a very specific, narrow sense, Springsteen is a more disciplined, focused and even better songwriter than Dylan. Again, I don't think he has ever been or could ever be what Dylan was in 1965. Or what Elvis Presley was in 1955. That said, there's an awful lot to be said for being Brahms. For my money, it's Springsteen's stuff I'd want to have on a desert island or to have buried in my tomb as I'm going to the great beyond.

***This is kind of a minor point in some ways, but I want to ask about how the book was fact-checked. There are a number of inaccuracies—Bruce playing "Roulette" at the No Nukes show, the date of Bruce jumping the wall at Grace-land—I don't know if you were made aware of those or how rigorous the standard was.***

Well, I'm afraid the buck stopped with me for fact-checking, and I must say I'm not shocked to learn that there are factual errors. It would be nice if I'd had those things straight. I did obviously rely

a lot for the bibliographical material on secondary sources, but the other thing I would say is that fundamentally this is a work of interpretation rather than original reporting or even original archival research. I certainly would like to have my facts straight, even when I don't.

***At the same time, I should say that I learned a lot from your book that I wouldn't have known otherwise, particularly with regard to the historical matters. I think you're right that there is a lot of interpretation going on, and you do succeed on a lot of levels where books that have come before don't even try. It's a unique book.***

In some sense a good title for this book would be *A Fan's Notes*, because I'm less interested in driving home the definitive reading of a song as I am in hopefully helping people figure out what they think about the song. I think it also gets back to the not-meeting-him in terms of not pretending this is anything more than it is, which is sort of a love song and sort of a "cover version" of Bruce Springsteen that you can critique for yourself. Did I have the drum part right, or would you use the same arrangement? Probably not. It's like critiquing someone's wedding: when it's our turn we'll have a cake just like that but we'll forget about the party favors. 🍷



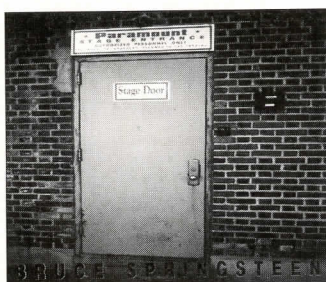
Crystal Cat comes through

# Asbury Park Worth the Wait

By Richard Breton

**F**or the benefit of our readers, *Backstreets* magazine provides ratings of unauthorized releases currently in circulation. Don't write us asking where these can be obtained. *Backstreets* in no manner, shape, or form endorses these recordings. These reviews are provided by our columnists solely for informational purposes. Despite these words of warning, some collectors will still seek this material out, and for those collectors, our reviews should help you steer clear of the real losers.

Unauthorized CDs are growing in numbers and with that growth, expect some real rip-offs—our advice is let the buyer beware, and demand to listen to material before you buy it. Each title here has been rated for packaging, performance, and sound quality on a scale from one to ten, one being awful, and ten being quality generally found on legitimate releases.

**•Asbury Park Night**

(Crystal Cat, 3CD)

221 minutes

Packaging: 9

Sound Quality: 8

Performance: 10

Here we have the long awaited release of the November 26, 1996 show at the Paramount Theater in Asbury Park, New Jersey. This title seemed to have a particularly tortuous journey before it was finally made available, due in no small part to mastering problems plaguing the first batch, which had to be scrapped. Due to the set list and special guests who were at this show, as

well as Crystal Cat's well-deserved reputation for superior mastering and overall sound, many waited very anxiously for this one to come out. And now that it has finally arrived, was it worth the wait? The answer is a resounding yes.

This was the final night of a three-night stand, all of which featured special guests as well as plenty of songs not previously played on the *Tom Joad* tour. In fact, to consider the Asbury Park shows as *Joad* tour shows really does a disservice to both. The Asbury Park performances were more a return to the past, as well as a glimpse into the future.

The show starts off with "For You," featuring Bruce on acoustic guitar and Danny Federici on accordion, appropriately and quite literally setting the tone for the night. There are numerous highlights during the show proper, including great acoustic versions of "Tougher Than the Rest" and "When You're Alone" with Soozie Tyrell on violin and Patti Scialfa on background vocals; a fine "All That Heaven Will Allow" with Soozie again and Richard Blackwell on percussion; "Wild Billy's Circus Story" with more Soozie and Danny; and a fantastic version of "Racing in the Street" in which Soozie digs a bit deeper to provide some great violin solos.

While all the above would be enough, there's nothing that can quite prepare you for the encores. The first encore song, "I Don't Want to Go Home," starts out great with Soozie, Patti, Richard and Danny playing in the background. After Bruce delivers the first verse and chorus with some of his most soulful singing of the night, the crowd explodes as Steve Van Zandt comes on stage with his guitar and delivers the second verse in truly fine form. With Bruce and Steven trading verses and harmonizing on the chorus for the remainder of the song, it's a performance for the ages. This is followed by a fine "Spirit in the

Night" which is more true to the original than other acoustic performances of it, and which also includes Big Danny Gallagher on background vocals as well as Vini "Mad Dog" Lopez on background vocals and tambourine. "Rosalita," which even has the "In a little cafe, on the other side of the border" intro, is such a raucous good time you'll forget these are acoustic guitars. Springsteen and Federici do "This Hard Land," then everybody comes back out while Bruce delivers a touching introduction to the final song of the night, "Sandy"—a perfect finale.

The third CD consists of bonus tracks, a more haphazard selection than one might expect. It contains only six songs from the two previous nights in Asbury Park, including "Independence Day," "Working on the Highway" and "I Wanna Marry You." The rest is filled out with songs played during the November-December stretch surrounding the Asbury Park shows. Of particular interest are the doo-wop arrangement of "If I Should Fall Behind" from Columbus, OH; and "The Hitter," a fine new character study performed only once on the tour in Syracuse, NY. The only pointless track, included at the end of the disc, is Bruce's "Stop Prop 309" speech from CA. There are plenty of other tracks that could have been included—something from the Nashville show, perhaps—and this shouldn't have made the cut as the sound is awful.

The packaging is in typical Crystal Cat style, with pictures of the Paramount and shots taken at the Asbury Park shows. The sound is similar to, if not better than, *Freehold Night*. Neither of these sets feature the exceptional sound (or minimal crowd noise) available on a few other *Joad* boots, but as they document the most unique performances of the *Tom Joad* tour in quite listenable sound, both are special and should not be missed. Highly recommended.

**•The Hitter in Syracuse**

(Handmade Records, 2CD-R)

142 minutes

Packaging: 7

Sound Quality: 8

Performance: 9

Over the past few years, home CD recorders and recordable CD blanks have steadily dropped in price and are now relatively affordable. With recent busts of bootleg manufacturers, distributors, and retailers, it was only a matter of time before new, smaller labels took matters into their own hands to produce their own CDs (referred to here as CD-Rs). There have been quite a few CD-R titles produced by such upstart labels as Doberman and Lizard, but in general the quality of the show, sound and/or packaging has made for either a minor hit (Doberman) or a complete miss (Lizard). Press runs for these CD-Rs have been small, and there are still other factors that have prevented folks from generally embracing them: some CD players have problems playing some CD-Rs, and some titles, particularly those on the Doberman label, are almost prohibitively expensive.

But few of the above factors pertain to a CD-R release called *The Hitter in Syracuse*, the finest CD-R title released so far. This set documents the complete November 13, 1996 show from the Landmark Theater in Syracuse, NY. While this show is most notable for the one-off performance of the title track, there's more to recommend it.

The show starts off with "The River," previously performed on this tour only in Freehold, and this time it's Bruce completely



solo. Bruce sounds a bit stiff during the first part of the show and doesn't begin to really loosen up until "Johnny 99"—after which the performances for the rest of night add up to an above-average show overall. Moving "The Ghost of Tom Joad" from the beginning of the show to the middle of the set seems to give the song much more power. It was a good crowd this night, and it shows in Bruce's performances.

The intros to most tracks are given their own index numbers, so you can go right to a track without having to go through the intro. The original release did have a short gap between the tracks, but this was corrected very early on and now all new copies offer a seamless show. The packaging rivals most "big label" boots and the discs themselves are simple: gold, with a stamp of the title, date and disc number. The sound on average is quite good; it starts out sounding a bit distant but gets better, with Bruce more clearly up front as the show progresses.

The one factor that does pertain to all CD-R releases is that they are hard to find. *The Hitter in Syracuse* is no exception. If you do find it, give it a real listen and I think you'll be delighted.

• **You Can Trust Your Car to the Man Who Wears the Star**  
(Labour of Love, 2CD)

149 minutes

Packaging: 6

Sound Quality: 8-10

Performance: 10

• **Summertime Bruce**  
(E. St., 3CD)

199 minutes

Packaging: 6

Sound Quality: 9

Performance: 10

Re-releasing a show is nothing new, especially behind promises of upgraded sound. The Crystal Cat label has been doing this very successfully for a few years now, most recently with a fine upgrade to the Wembley, July 4, 1985 show called *Independence Night*. A couple of new titles on different labels are making the same promise. The shows are already well-known and universally celebrated as high quality, so I'll dispense with the details and concentrate on the sound.

First up is *You Can Trust Your Car to the Man Who Wears the Star* from

Labour of Love. Labour of Love is the label famous for the *Lost Masters* series of demos, band rehearsals and outtakes. This is their first foray into a live release, for which they've chosen the February 5, 1975 show at the Main Point in Bryn Mawr, PA. But they're up against the Masters Plus version of *The Saint, the Incident, and the Main Point Shuffle* on the Great Dane label, itself a five-star release with sound quality. The first disc, in particular, set the standard against which all other releases need to be judged. Most of the second disc of Great Dane's release has poorer sound, and this is where any improvements would be most needed.

I'm not going to beat around the bush, *You Can Trust Your Car* is not a significant upgrade to *The Saint, the Incident, and the Main Point Shuffle*. This is not to say that there's no difference in sound, but the differences are subtle.

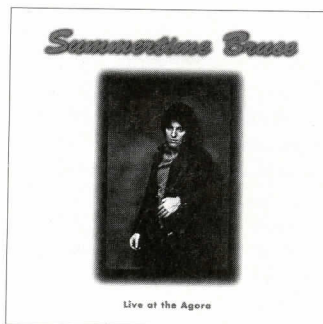
While the first discs on both are virtually carbon copies, the second disc on the Labour of Love set has a bit less hiss and radio static in the background. It appears that they took a copy of the Great Dane version and somehow processed it to virtually eliminate any hiss—possibly using some dynamic range enhancer. At some points a slight "breathing" sound can be detected, but it's minimal and evident mainly on headphones. Labour of Love also slightly reduced the high-levels at some points, most noticeably on "New York City Serenade"—the worst-sounding track on both sets. Neither version sounds bad, and the differences are so slight hardly anyone would notice.

The Labour of Love packaging is different, with a cover and picture discs that replicate the vinyl boot of the same name, with a few small but nice performance pictures with Suki Lahav inside. Still, the Great Dane package showed greater imagination and remains superior.

Anyone expecting a major upgrade to disc two, or at least "New York City Serenade," will be disappointed. Anyone who couldn't find the Masters Plus version of *The Saint* will be happy as a clam. Even those who have a copy of the Great Dane title may still be in need of a replacement: there has been some concern lately about "CD rot," a weird

sort of degenerative phenomenon that results in worsening sound and discoloration over time. CD rot may sound like an urban myth, and it hasn't been a problem with most discs in circulation, but unfortunately a few of the Great Dane titles—including *The Saint* and *Piece de Resistance*—appear to be susceptible.

With *You Can Trust Your Car* Labour of Love does both a service (for those who don't have *The Saint* or need to replace it) and disservice (if they're behind the claims of truly better sound than *The Saint*). There are many other shows in dire need of an upgrade; let's hope for better next time around.



Far more successful is *Summertime Bruce*, E. St.'s upgrade of the August 9, 1978, Agora show. This performance was previously released as *The Teenage Werewolf* on the Silver Rarities label, no real slouch in the sound department itself. Again, it sounds like a copy of the same source was used, but in this case the tape used to make *Summertime Bruce* seems to be at least one generation better than the one for *The Teenage Werewolf*. The sound on *Summertime Bruce* is definitely brighter and the stereo separation slightly better, with a punch that packs a wallop.

Even the bonus tracks, "Point Blank" and "Kitty's Back" taken from a soundboard of the September 19, 1978, New York Palladium show, are great. A minor complaint is that they should have let the applause for the Agora show completely fade out before the bonus tracks instead of mixing them in almost right behind Bruce saying his "thank you" to Cleveland.

Compared to other 1978 broadcasts, *Summertime Bruce* surpasses even the venerable *Piece de Resistance* in terms of sound. There's a new leader of the '78 pack, and it howls.

## the backstreets jukebox

1. **Bruce Springsteen**  
*The River*  
Columbia (CD)

2. **Iris DeMent**  
*The Way I Should*  
Warner Bros. (CD)

3. **Brad**  
*Interiors*  
Epic (CD)

4. **Freedy Johnston**  
*Never Home*  
Elektra (CD)

5. **Verbow**  
*Chronicles*  
550 Music/Epic (CD)

6. **Steve Earle**  
*El Corazon*  
E Squared (CD)

7. **The Delevantes**  
*Postcards From Along the Way*  
Capitol (CD)

8. **Radiohead**  
*OK Computer*  
Capitol (CD)

9. **Southside Johnny**  
*Hearts of Stone*  
Epic (CD)

10. **Pigeonhed**  
*The Full Sentence*  
Sub Pop (CD)

**10**  
**Monster**  
Discs to Play Today  
and Everyday



Both live albums reissued

## Bruce Covers: The Right Stuff

**B**ruce Springsteen's name may be appearing on record release schedules, but don't get your hopes up for a new album; his label is merely filling this down-time with several reissues.

Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band's *Live/1975-85* is being put out on Sony Legacy in its third packaging format. Several years ago the 3CD set's cardboard box was changed to a vertical configuration from the original LP-sized square. The new package will eliminate the cardboard box altogether in favor of a jewelbox that will fit in most store racks.

Another live Springsteen set is being released in the U.S. for the first time, though to most collectors this is, for all intents and purposes, simply a reissue. Columbia is distributing a U.S. pressing of the MTV *Plugged* CD, which was originally sold in Europe only to promote Springsteen's 1992-93 World Tour; while a video from the MTV performance was issued in the U.S., the CD was not.

With the renewed popularity of "Secret Garden" this year, it's surprising that there hasn't been a new CD single for the song in the U.S. as in other countries. The "Jerry Maguire mix" of the song, which was put together and distributed independently from radio station to radio station, has never been officially released by Springsteen's label in any country—but it seems that it may have come close. According to one report, Columbia pressed a few hundred copies to send out as promos before Springsteen objected. While the discs were supposed to be destroyed, some have reportedly managed to find their way to the collectors' market. The "Jerry Maguire mix" was also included on a TM Century Hitdisc, part of a music library service to which many radio stations subscribe.

The release of the *One Step Up/Two Steps Back* tribute compilation is being handled in true

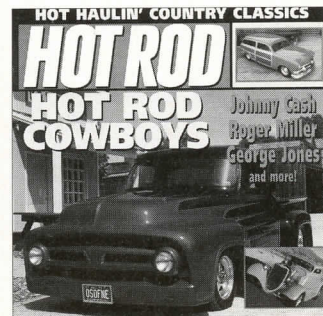
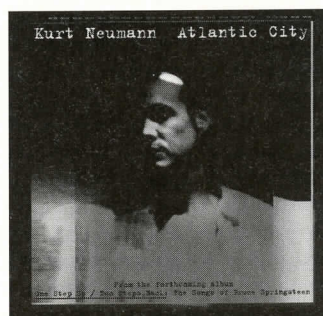
Springsteen spirit by its label, The Right Stuff. In addition to contributing part of the proceeds to World Hunger Year, the label is also planning for eight non-LP b-sides: two CD singles from the album will contain four bonus tracks each.

The first single, released a month before the album, is "Atlantic City" by Kurt Nuemann (of the Bodeans), with the following b-sides: the Yell Leaders, "I Wish I Were Blind"; Bumpin' Uglies, "My Beautiful Reward"; Dusty Wright, "Mary, Queen of Arkansas"; and Joe D'Urso & Stone Caravan, "Bye Bye Johnny" (Alt. Cajun Version). The term "b-side" has been used more loosely in the digital age, but with vinyl configurations of the singles planned for jukeboxes, some of these bonus tracks will be actual flipsides.

*One Step Up/Two Steps Back* was planned as two separately-packaged CDs, but will now be released as a two-disc set. An advance promotional sampler in a cardboard sleeve contains five tracks from each disc.

Another compilation from The Right Stuff didn't arrive with nearly as much fanfare, but Bruce fans may want to add it to their collection for its inclusion of two more Bruce covers not on the *One Step Up* set. *Hot Rod Rock Vol. 2: Hot Rod Cowboys*—a compilation of "Hot Haulin' Country Classics," according to the sleeve—features Mel McDaniel's "Stand on It" and Johnny Cash's "Highway Patrolman." Adding to the secondary Springsteen theme here is the opening track, Robert Mitchum's "The Ballad of Thunder Road."

One more thing to look out for from The Right Stuff—a label, like Razor & Tie, that appears to be one to watch for fans of Springsteen and his ilk—is a reissue of Nils Lofgren's *Code of the Road*. This live set of 17 tracks, recorded at the Hammer-smith Odeon in London for BBC Radio One, will be packaged in a digipack with slipcase.



Clockwise from upper-left: the first single release from *One Step Up*; *Hot Rod Rock Vol. 2*; Clarence Clemons' new album from Japan, *Get It On*; advance promo sampler from *One Step Up*.

Nils Lofgren—*Archive Alive!* is a different live album from Nils now available on Archive/Paradigm. The CD captures a 1985 performance, originally a radio broadcast, from the Stone Pony. Yet another live Nils CD, mentioned in last issue's "On Lips" column, consists of more recent material: *Acoustic Live* contains 17 acoustic tracks recorded in January of this year and is available only through Lofgren's management company. For ordering information check out <<http://rockhouse.com/nils/>> or write: Anson Smith Management, Vision Music Inc., 3 Bethesda Metro Center, Suite 505, Bethesda, MD 20814.

Clarence Clemons has released a follow-up to 1995's *Peacemaker* entitled *Get It On*, currently available only from Japan. This is essentially Clarence's fourth album, though he trades off singing duties with a female vocalist for this project, and the artists are listed on the cover as "Aja & the Big Man." The CD, on the Dream Train label, features 11 tracks; with the exception of Ike and Tina Turner's "Baby Get It

On," all written or co-written by either Clarence or Aja.

Joe Grushecky and the House-rockers have a new album in the can, which should hit the shelves sometime this fall. Like 1995's *American Babylon*, Grushecky's new record features collaboration with Springsteen, though not to the same degree. Bruce doesn't produce or perform, but he and Grushecky co-wrote four tracks: "Idiot's Delight," "Cheap Motel," "I'm Not Sleeping," and "1945." At press time the still-untitled album is in search of a label in the U.S., but it is set for release in Europe on the Musidisc label, which put out Southside Johnny's *Spittin' Fire* earlier this year.

Elektra's effort to finally issue *No Nukes* on compact disc this year has fallen through; the title has been postponed with no new release date scheduled. A write-in campaign has been started on the internet to urge Elektra to release *No Nukes*; send letters to: Ms. Sylvia Rhone, Chairman and CEO, Elektra Entertainment Group, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10019.

—Christopher Phillips



# CLASSIFIEDS

## PERSONALS

**AMY: GREAT TO SEE YOU! I'D WAIT ANOTHER** four years just to spend the afternoon with you again. Bob.

**SPANISH FAN LOOKING FOR PENPALS IN NJ AND** other states. Write Lukas at Sants 109, 2oh 1, Barcelona, SPAIN.

**YO BRUCE: IT'S TIME FOR THE BIG PAYBACK FOR** your longtime fans. Boxed set and E Street Band tour, summer '98. Please. Thanks.

**WANTED: PENPALS FROM OVERSEAS, IRELAND,** Europe, elsewhere. Please write: Michael T., 45 Oak Ridge Rd., Clifton, NJ 07013.

**TO PETER MESTACH/THUNDER ROAD: I WANT MY** t-shirt and subscription! Errin Anderson, 581 Thesaly Circle, Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA, K1H 5W9.

**A.J. IN CHICAGO: MET YOU AT SEATTLE SHOW.** Lost your address. E-mail me at <fscalise.ix.netcom.com>. Frank.

**NETCONG, NJ WILDMEN: ONE SOFT INFESTED** summer Dan, Mike, OB and Don became friends, trying in vain to breathe the fire we were born in. Catching rides down the Garden State Parkway, tying faith between our teeth, sleeping in that old abandoned Jenkinson's Pt. Pleasant, NJ beach house, getting wasted in the heat. Willie and the

boys from the tribute band Backstreets, thanks again for another unbelievable summer (1997).

## WANTED

**SPRINGSTEEN COLLECTORS: GREAT LIST OF** Bruce items for trade (German Blitz-promos, etc.) Also cover versions. Aage Slotvik, N-8900 Br. Sund, NORWAY.

**BRUCE AUDIO WANTED, 1974-1996. YOUR LIST** gets mine. J.G., 4540 Raleigh Ave., Alexandria, VA 22304.

**HAVE LOVE, WILL TRAVEL. VETERAN FAN FROM** Main Point days looking for one (or two) great seat(s) to any show. Rick, (215) 977-8334.

## FOR SALE

**JAMES DEELY ROCKS! PICK UP THE NEW CD, EL** Corazon Negro, from Big America Records now! For more info send SASE to B.A.R., PO Box 5244, Los Angeles, CA 90296 or check out our website: <www.jamesd.com>.

**SPRINGSTEEN CDS AND RECORDS AUCTION.** Huge collection of European live and studio. Send SASE to Jay Beaulieu, 201 South 18th St., Apt. 711, Philadelphia, PA 19103. E-mail: <jay21@wharton.upenn.edu>.

**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN RARITIES AUCTION, 80+** items, mostly 1970s. Records, tapes, posters, promo items. "Blinded" sleeve, BTR promo kit, promo BTR key chain, "Bottom Line" BTR poster, and much more. View details and photos online at

## RATES

### CLASSIFIED RATES: RATES ARE \$1 A WORD

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<<http://www.rarebeatles.com/springsteen.htm>> or see list in Goldmine issue #445 (8/15 cover date). Send for free list to: Mitch McGeary, PO Box 3393, Lacey, WA 98509. E-mail: <mm@rarebeatles.com>. Auction deadline 9/30/97.

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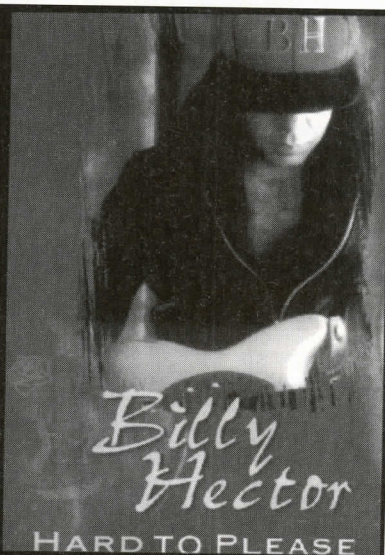
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SUMMER/FALL 1997

## Continued from page 5

A few years later, he releases *Greatest Hits* on the eve of the Grammys, where "Streets of Philadelphia" is expected to take home a clutch of awards. Two years later, Bruce postpones five European concerts to perform for one night on the Oscars. Now comes word that a book of his lyrics is to be published with Bruce's personal introductions. When will this book be available? Well, it's planned to coincide with Bruce's induction to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. The book in itself is a good idea, but the timing is just so *show-bizzy*. Keep in mind that Springsteen was once reluctant to even sell t-shirts at his concerts and fought the very idea of a live album for years. Oddly, now that he has more money than he ever could have dreamed possible, he seems perfectly willing to pander to commercial considerations. What's going on here? (Note to Bruce: if you *really* want to make some bucks, release a boxed set.)

Finally, has anyone noticed how long Bruce has been bemoaning his legend as a first-rate rock and roller? I don't think I've read an interview with him in the last decade in which he hasn't commented on his need to "demythologize" himself. I congratulate Bruce for not reapplying the *BUSA* formula to subsequent career moves. The *Tunnel of Love* album and tour beautifully demonstrated that Bruce could move in a new, mature direction and still engage his audience. In interviews from that period, he talked of his frustration at the misinterpretation of "Born in the USA." He also spoke at length of how he had found life and meaning outside of his music. He then took four years off to concentrate on his private life. When he came back, he was still talking about how "Born in the USA" was misread. Even now, Bruce keeps harping on and on about how this tour is giving him an opportunity to "redefine" himself. Redefine himself from what, exactly? The *BUSA* tour was over twelve years ago. For most people, fans included, it's either a distant memory or simply another chapter in Bruce's long career. The only person who seems hung up on Bruce's "myth" is Bruce himself. His interviews sound more gloomy and self-absorbed now than before he was married and had three wonderful children.

I know portions of this letter may sound harsh, but I believe its essence is true. I'm not some possessive fan pining for the "old" Bruce. When he dismissed the E Street Band I didn't condemn him. On the contrary, I thought it would open up some new musical directions for him. I'm not concerned with "old" Bruce or "new" Bruce; I'm concerned with quality Bruce.

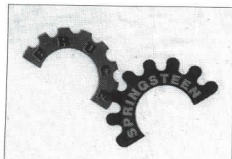
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# BOSS STUFF FROM BACKSTREET RECORDS

## JOAD TOUR GEAR

**DENIM SHIRT** Probably the nicest item sold on tour, this is a sturdy, light-blue denim work shirt with a subtle design over the left front pocket: the "gear" logo, designed by Bruce himself. Two interlocking gears—one says "Bruce" and the other says "Springsteen"—embroidered in red, green, white and black. We've been trying to get these shirts ever since the tour started, and they're now available in Large, XL and a few XXL too!.....\$40



**JOAD T-SHIRT #1** A nice gray garment-dyed t-shirt, with "Bruce Springsteen: Ghost of Tom Joad" screened on the left front chest. On the back is an illustration with type, "The Highway is Alive Tonight." Large and XL.....\$20



**JOAD T-SHIRT #2** A "natural" t-shirt, basically a cream color, with the "gears" logo on the front pocket area much like the denim shirt (though here it's silkscreened rather than embroidered). The back of the shirt lists the cities of the initial leg of the tour, Los Angeles through Boston, in the black Joad type. Available in Large only.....\$20

**HENLEY SHIRT** A brown long-sleeve henley shirt with three buttons, with "Bruce Springsteen: Ghost of Tom Joad" embroidery on the left front chest. Available Large and XL.....\$30



**JOAD CAP** A two-toned baseball cap, olive green top with a black brim, with nice "Bruce Springsteen: Ghost of Tom Joad" embroidery, a very sharp cap.....\$16



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**TOM JOAD LIMITED EDITION JAPANESE 2CD SET** Released to coincide with Springsteen's shows in Tokyo is this fantastic limited release, combining *The Ghost of Tom Joad* album with the "Missing" CD5 (see below for track listing). The two CDs are housed in fantastic packaging, a nice cardboard digipak with a "Missing" sticker, lyrics in both English and Japanese, plus an integrated obi.....\$40

**TOM JOAD LIMITED ED. AUSTRALIAN 2CD SET** Similar to the Japanese set above, combining the same two CDs, but in a different package—a different cardboard folding digipak, with "Australian Tour Edition" on the front, back and spine. More photos on the inside, as a list of the Australia tour dates and a pocket that holds the CD booklet. Another great package.....\$30

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**UK SECRET GARDEN CD5 #4** As above, with unique PS. Tracks: Secret Garden (strings)/Blood Brothers (rock version)/Streets of Philly/Highway 29.....\$12

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from interviews to articles, "Random Notes," reviews, readers' polls... you name it. 356 pp...\$13

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**THE GHOST OF TOM JOAD Songbook** Bruce's new one! Specify piano or guitar.....\$23

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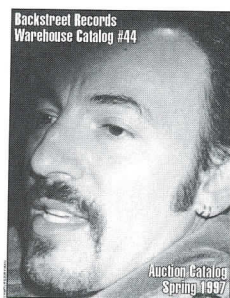
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